

Summary Report

Field Response to *The Intermediate Program*

**A Report to
The Intermediate Program Team**

**Prepared by
A. Toutant Consulting Group Ltd.**

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The Program Evaluation and Research Branch of the Ministry of Education thanks all individuals and groups for their extensive and perceptive responses to *The Intermediate Program: Learning in British Columbia, Response Draft*. The many hours of thoughtful work that went into the responses submitted will assist the Intermediate Program Team in their refinement of the document. Further, appreciation is extended to the Intermediate Program Field Response Committee and A. Toutant Consulting Group Ltd. for their review, analysis, and summary of the findings.

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INTRODUCTION

The Intermediate Program Team distributed *The Intermediate Program: Learning in British Columbia, Response Draft* to the field for response in May 1990. The Ministry sent copies of the draft document to all school districts for further distribution to interested members of the public. The Ministry requested receipt of responses to the document by April 1, 1991.

The Program Evaluation and Research Branch of the Ministry of Education employed the services of A. Toutant Consulting Group Ltd. to conduct the review and analysis of the field responses to the document. The Intermediate Program Team and researcher met to develop a questionnaire to gather descriptive information from the field about all aspects of the Program document. The Program Team wanted to assemble as wide a range of views as possible to assist them in the refining of the document. Thus the questionnaire contained only open-ended questions to encourage respondents to elaborate on their views.

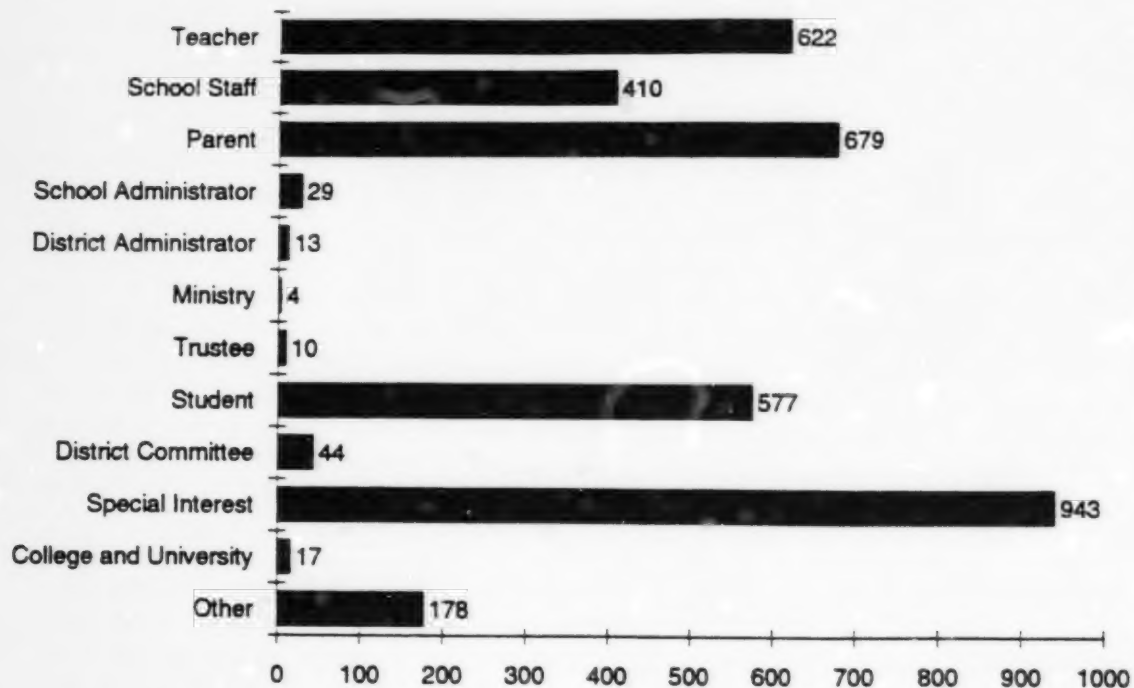
To assist in analyzing and synthesizing the results, the researcher formed the Intermediate Program Field Response Committee, a group composed of representatives from shareholder organizations. The Committee met to read responses, to identify major themes and issues, to provide direction to the researcher regarding the analyses of the data, the format of the report, and preparation of the recommendations, and to read the final draft of the report. It should be noted that the B.C.T.F. members attended only the first two-day meeting. The purpose of gathering and summarizing the information from the field is to assist the Intermediate Program Team in revising the program document in light of the views of the major shareholders.

Field responses to *The Intermediate Program* ranged from individual submissions to those from associations representing up to 4000 members. They reflect the views of teachers, school staffs, parents, students, trustees, administrators, school district committees, district implementation groups, Provincial Specialist Associations, and others. In several cases, groups consisted of mixed membership, for example, some groups included teachers, parents, students, and district personnel.

Those responding used a variety of formats to present their views: some respondents used the form provided; some used the outline of the form to compose a report; others submitted a letter or created their own format to focus on particular issues; others surveyed their memberships to present a summary report of their findings; and two groups submitted video presentations. In some cases, the respondents did not identify themselves, their association, or the number of individuals in their group. In reading such responses, the respondents' affiliation often became apparent. In charts and graphs, where the responding population is described numerically, the numbers refer to questionnaires received. Thus, with groups, the totals noted are numbers of groups responding, not the total number of individuals in the group. However, in the text of the report, the number of members in the group responding is noted where available.

The chart on page 2 shows the number of responses received from the various populations.

Total Responses to *The Intermediate Program*



Individual teachers who identified their specialty are included with "teacher," unless they completed a form letter as a representative of a particular group, in which case, they are included in "special interest." In the total response there were 815 form letters received. These responses are summarized in Appendix 2: "Summary of Group Responses."

In all, there were 3526 responses received. Although the closing date for returns was April 1, all returns received by May 15 were accepted and included in the reports. To accommodate the need of the Intermediate Program Team to complete a revision of the Program by June 30, the researcher developed reports as follows:

Summary Report

This report uses a random sample of 350, taken from the 2207 responses received by April 13, to convey what respondents like about the Program, what is of concern to them, and what they want to see implemented. It should be noted that the report uses quotations from these response forms to elaborate on points made.

Appendix 1: Summary of Group Responses

This report categorizes all group responses received by the researcher by April 13 by type of group: school staff, parents, school district committee, PSA, school district specialist committee, student, trustee, those who identified themselves as public or special interest group, and "other."

This report summarizes the group responses in order to garner from each group: strengths in the document; concerns about the document and its implementation that members of the group expressed frequently; and recommendations stated or implied in the response.

Appendix 2: Variance Report

This report reviews, summarizes, and notes variance in all returns received by the researcher after April 13.

All three reports describe responses from the field in order to provide the Ministry and the Intermediate Program Team with qualitative rather than quantitative information. The reports emphasize is the range of views held by the respondents and the reasons they give. Frequently, the reports use quotations taken directly from the questionnaires. In these instances, the number of the questionnaire follows the quotation in parentheses. Statistical inference (e.g., from t-tests) is inappropriate since the emphasis is on qualitative information.

The responses did not come from a pre-specified sampling frame, nor was a rigid sampling methodology applied. Responses were encouraged from all interested in the Program. Hence, statistical inference with this lack of experimental design would be invalid. The inclusion of the anecdotal comments in summarizing the results of the survey helps to avoid the danger, in extrapolating information statistically from an open-ended questionnaire, that individual responses are presented out of context, or that unusual or powerful comments may not be heard. The comments convey a sense of the tone, voice, and feelings of the respondents and show the way in which the respondents have connected and associated ideas that are important to them. For example, many teachers responded to questions about Evaluation and Assessment in terms of workload or class size or funding because, for them, these issues are linked. Above all, through anecdotal comments recurring themes are revealed -- themes which may not be related to specific items on the questionnaire but which are vitally relevant and useful to the Team as they revise the document. In many cases, the theme of change and the attitudes of the respondents to change forms the crucial nucleus around which answers revolve.

Several respondents lauded the process used by the Ministry in its efforts to open its communications with the field; for example:

"I appreciate the opportunity to provide input into the draft, and I do believe that Ministry personnel are doing the very best they can in a very difficult climate." (1073)

Overall, the findings were that many respondents expressed support for the philosophy, rationale, and goals outlined in *The Intermediate Program*, confirmed that it reflects the principles of the *Year 2000* document, agreed that today's students will need new "basics" to live in the world of tomorrow, and acknowledged that learning should address the development of the whole person. At the same time, the findings reveal that many expressed concerns about the pragmatic issues of implementing such a major change, because of the amount of financial resources it will consume and the pressures it might add to an already overloaded system.

Several respondents commended the Intermediate Team for grappling with the "monumental task" of defining a new Intermediate Program based on principles of learning.

"Many features of *The Intermediate Program* are applauded by teachers as reflective of the type of flexible, responsive, 'student-centred' education we want to deliver. Its goals and philosophy are accepted as sound and noteworthy. The concept of learner-focused instruction, the integration of subjects, and the inclusion of special needs students within regular classrooms are realities in many B.C. schools. This document offers support and validation of many current practices. The empowering of teachers as respected professionals with the skills and responsibilities to develop positive environments is a welcome affirmation of our efforts and a challenge to continue to supply the very best for our students." (268)

"There is much evidence to support the fact that a child will not do well in school if there are difficult circumstances surrounding the home life. It is so refreshing to see six goals instead of one... My main concern with *The Year 2000* is that teachers say they agree with the philosophy and yet almost all conversations surround only the academic or intellectual goals." (1563)

Most respondents lauded the positions in the document but raised questions, expressed concerns, and made recommendations to assist the Program Team in strengthening *The Intermediate Program* so that the vision might be realized. Most questions, concerns, and recommendations centred on issues of implementation.

On the other hand, a few respondents expressed a total lack of support for the draft of *The Intermediate Program*. For these people, the change is too dramatic, too involved, too frustrating, or they just do not accept the positions taken in the document. The following statement represents those who do not intend to support the Program:

"The bottom line for me is this. I've had enough. I don't want to waste any more of my time on *The Year 2000*. I will support any moves to derail it. I will resist any arbitrary and forced implementation." (1975)

This report summarizes the strengths of the document as identified by the respondents as well as the concerns they expressed and the suggestions they gave to improve *The Intermediate Program*.

Reactions to *The Intermediate Program*

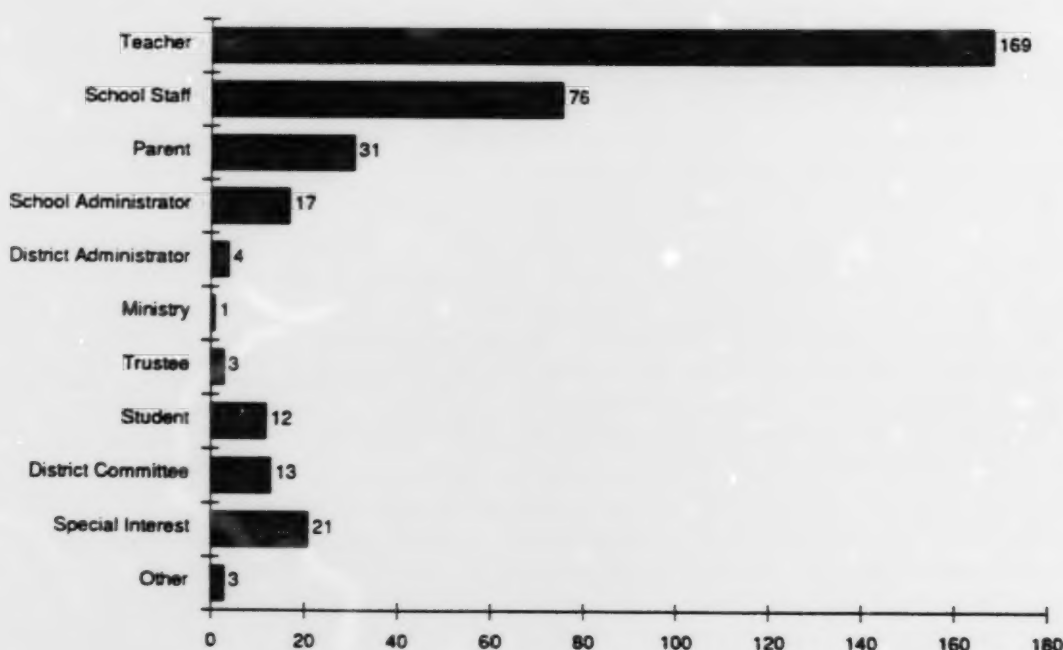
REACTIONS TO THE INTERMEDIATE PROGRAM

Summary of Sample Responses

This section reports information gathered from a content analysis of anecdotal comments from the sample of 350 responses to the document.

A random sample of 350 was used to convey what respondents like about the Program, what is of concern to them, and what they want to see implemented. To report on the sample of 350 responses, a programmer designed a custom computer database, based on the anecdotal format of the response form. This program allowed the input of all comments in the sample and enabled the researcher to examine various relationships among responses and to investigate certain themes identified by the Intermediate Field Response Committee. The database also permitted close examination of how the groups responded as a whole to various areas of the document, thus assisting the researcher in the review and analysis of all responses.

The following chart shows the number of responses received from each population included in the sample of 350.



The following summary is a synthesis of the data gathered from a content analysis of anecdotal comments. The report is organized using the same headings as those on the response form. Frequently, the report quotes examples of specific concerns to illustrate the tone of responses or the divergence of views and opinions held.

To assist the Program Team in locating more information on the views expressed, the number of the questionnaire quoted is identified in parentheses after each quotation.

The Present System

This section of the questionnaire invited respondents to consider the context for change: to identify their concerns with the current system, comment on how the intentions of *The Intermediate Program* address these concerns, and comment on their current practice.

What are your concerns with the present system?

In this section of the questionnaire, respondents stated their opinions regarding the effectiveness of the present system. The majority of the responses were negative, critical of the present system. A small number were positive and a few presented two sides.

There is much cumulative wisdom in the present system; however, some concerns include: inadequate facilities, space limitations, safety problems, lack of preparation time, excessive bureaucratic demands on teachers, strains of mainstreaming, and curriculum overload. (1113)

To many who made negative comments, the present system lacks relevance and is inhumane, rigid, and controlling.

LACK OF RELEVANCE

The lack of relevance of the current curriculum was a frequently expressed concern. Some respondents said that the system is not in step with society's needs, that some methods currently used are outdated and need to be changed. Others implied that the system is out of step because it is too competitive, too curriculum-oriented, not diverse enough to handle individual differences, not based on holistic learning principles, and over-stresses intellectual development. Some respondents implied that the high drop-out rate is related to the curriculum's lack of personal relevance to students. Some respondents find that technology changes so fast it is difficult for them to keep up and make their programs relevant. Others stated that school programs are not technologically relevant to today's world due to lack of available new resources. Still

School is seen by many students as having little worth, not as being a place to learn, not as an experience with intrinsic value, but rather a social setting, a hoop to be jumped through, and by parents and community as a babysitting service. (993)

No relevance to the real world. (1680)

It is inappropriate for a "shrinking" world to place this much emphasis on white middle-class standards and the protestant work ethic. It is inappropriate for a British Columbia where the only constant is change itself. It is sadly inadequate to prepare our students with tools already outmoded. They'll need to become creative problem-solvers and our current system doesn't value or engender those qualities. (2)

others stated that the present system is not culturally relevant to our multicultural society's needs; for example, "Besoin très important et urgent d'avoir la programme en français." (337) Several specialist groups explained how the current system is limited in its support for their area. While many parents expressed concerns similar to the teachers', others expressed belief that it is competition and letter grades that help to make school relevant to the "real world."

At the same time, several respondents said that the current system is fine, implying that the proposed curriculum is irrelevant to their needs at this time.

AN INHUMANE SYSTEM

Many respondents expressed the concern that the present system is not student-centred and is driven by standardized tests and competition, which fosters feelings of inadequacy in people and "seems geared to drive (some students) out of the system." (120) These respondents see the present system as inhumane, because "there is little recognition of individual learning styles. Special needs and gifted students have needs that are not being properly addressed," (154) "Students do not fit into our round holes and are being denied full educational opportunities," (196) and "The steps are too big for some children, yet we continue to move them on without mastery." (1006) Some expressed the concern that the present curricula are too content-driven and inflexible to accommodate the emotional and academic needs of students. Others said that high teacher-student ratios, inadequate funding, and poor facilities prevent teachers from giving students the personalized attention many of them need. However, not all respondents hold these views. A few believe that the system exists to keep people in line (e.g., #286).

A RIGID AND CONTROLLING SYSTEM

Many respondents expressed the concern that the system is rigid and controlling, with little flexibility provided to the schools. Collectively, educators identified class size, inappropriate physical space

Subject areas have too few, if any, overlapping elements. This has a counter-productive influence in enabling children to make inferences and/or applications from one subject area to another. Lack of relevant inferences directly impedes children from constructing a relevant mental model encompassing the purpose and importance of learning. (739)

(The present system) promotes competition, both academically and socially, but it still does not prepare students for the real world. (96)

It (the present system) is rather good compared with the proposal of The Intermediate Program. (181)

Why are we throwing out what works? (561)

The present system seems remarkably good, given all its pressures and the limited funding. (178)

Too many kids are compelled to keep doing things they are no good at. (1665)

Failure is built into the system at all levels and is unavoidable at all levels of learning. (We have) content-focused education ... teacher-centred education is inappropriate. Educational research does not support present-day practice. (228)

Our concerns with the present system are that they do not meet the emotional or academic needs of the students. It is too restrictive; intellectual development is the focus and teacher evaluation is the prime yardstick used to ascertain the effectiveness of the program. The present system is compartmentalized and distances the integration of subject matter. (567)

Lack of economic and human resources to properly deal with the students identified as needing care -- for both low achievers and high achievers. (1166)

I am concerned about the huge range of inappropriate labels that children get. Children live up or down to their label, it is a self-fulfilling prophecy. (112)

Without a set amount of knowledge to be covered per year, per grade, and no ground rules to enforce it, how can it become apparent if a teacher is lethargic or too soft; or if students are slow learners or lazy? People, all people, are generally lazy. Children are no exceptions ... Without glory for the best and shame for the worst, where is the purpose and direction? (286)

The choices that students make in their final years of education are often based on intimidating conflicts or other arbitrary requirements that may not be in a student's best interest. (994)

and facilities, lack of funding, limitations of the fiscal framework, excessive workload, lack of time to deal with discipline problems, lack of time for planning and collaboration, curriculum overload, restrictive timetables, and the amount of change being requested of them as examples of the excessive and uncontrollable problems that they face. As well, they consider that the system does not promote or support the kinds of communication necessary for it to "heal itself." While many parents expressed concerns similar to the above, others expressed concerns that the present system is "out of control" and beyond their control because it puts "too much emphasis on social skills and their children spend too much educational time watching videos, playing games" and "have too many days off school."

In summary, the majority of respondents see many problems with the present system: in it, learning is not always relevant, it has too little focus on student needs, and it contains many uncontrollable problems. For some, the existing system has both strengths and weaknesses. For a few, the system is just fine.

How do the intents of The Intermediate Program address your concerns?

In responding to this question, people's comments ranged from expressions of strong support: "I am excited about many of the ideas and new directions" and "I like what I read," to statements of disapproval, frequently stated as simply as: "They don't." Some responses appeared to be a plea for a more balanced approach to change. Some others, while acknowledging the need to change in the directions described in the document, imply that they are not willing to leave the "tried and true." Collectively, however, the responses indicate that for many respondents the intents of the document do address their concerns about lack of relevance and the need to make the system more humane.

But, for many respondents, the intents do not sufficiently address the needs of the teachers and

Schools are taking on more and more responsibility, i.e., teaching values, social skills, life skills, as well as academic skills. Too much responsibility may weaken all areas and put extra stress on teachers. (065)

Immense school size, rigid bureaucratic structures, multiple classroom changes, classrooms with little or no natural light or ventilation, expanding class sizes, lack of personal space, lack of storage space, limited areas of privacy or "alone" time, difficulties in obtaining access to supplies, copiers, computers, and telephones, are elements that create walls of distance and limited interactions with students, parents, and colleagues. (115)

Time! More and more is being implemented -- teach this -- now this!... Teachers cannot cope with the increasing load. There is no indication that class size will ever lower significantly. (18)

The intents of The Intermediate Program appear to look at the individual needs of each student, not simply the needs of a group of people who happen to be held together by the same chronological age. It attends to the students rather than treating them merely as a cog in the system. Continuous progress, integration of subject matter, and student self-evaluation are positive moves to make education more enjoyable and more effective. (567)

Abandonment of a working system and replacement with a totally new system is a radical form of change. Prior experience suggests that radical change often fails and results in a return to the old system a few years down the road. Such gyrations can have a devastating impact on the students subjected to the experimentation. These problems could be avoided by an evolutionary approach rather than a revolutionary approach. (1042)

the rigidity and limitations of the present system, since "*The Intermediate Program* document can only deal with philosophical questions, not the practical issues, which can only be solved by funding" (96), and by improved facilities, parent support, teacher training and retraining, reduction in workload, and improved communications in the system. For many, the intents of the Intermediate document do not address their concerns, but add to them. The pragmatic and logistical issues of implementing such a program overwhelm and disconcert them and the concern that the proposed Program is too socially oriented and does not put sufficient value on academic and "intellectual rigour" frustrates them.

However, for the most part, respondents expressed pleasure with the Program's promotion of curriculum flexibility, the holistic approach to learning, the focus on the whole child to show respect for each individual, the encouragement of problem-solving and critical thinking, the extension of this caring attitude to the later intermediate years, the emphasis on life skills for the job market, and the positive assessment and evaluation that is encouraging to students.

Many of the ideas presented in The Intermediate Program reflect current practice. Please comment on the current practice that you support or in which you are involved in your school or district.

In response to this item, many respondents reported that they are in the process of making changes. Some identified philosophical shifts in their moves towards student-centred learning and a focus on more than "just intellectual development." A few respondents identified organizational or structural changes in their schools, such as timetable adjustments to support team teaching and cross-curricular activities, an organized peer tutoring and counselling program, the introduction of Native Language classes, the use of school-wide themes to organize instruction, a move to multi-grade

The Intermediate Program does not address the real choices in terms of the mechanics of operating a school: the physical infrastructure (student/teacher ratios, teachers moving from class to class); the issue of the public perception of teachers. ... Without communication with parents and the understanding of the public, the perception of teachers may worsen. But with more freedom to use our intellectual strengths, designing our own curriculum, we may have more accountability and the possibility of more respect. (198)

The Intermediate Program addresses the needs of children to learn life skills. There is no dispute about the need for curriculum changes in schools to meet needs of the future. However, the Program does not address the needs of teachers: time for in-service and professional development. Rather, we have less time than we ever had. (1065)

More academic content is needed. There is an over-emphasis on the social and emotional domains. Standards and requirements are needed. Self-motivation is not realistic with many students. A very watered-down program. (140)

It can put "quality and craftsmanship" into education -- we hope. (1067)

Emphasis is now focused on the student. All components are clearly outlined as a whole. All our concerns are addressed except for time. (685)

Recognizes that the gifted learner has special needs. Proposes to respond to these needs by recognizing and accommodating the learning style and rate of these students. (872)

Greater focus on thinking skills and there is more room for teachers to take risks. (1044)

Many of the ideas are already in place, such as: integrating strands, integrating special needs kids, and evaluation is accomplished in a continuous fashion. (104)

In our school, we are currently modifying the curriculum to fit student needs and using a variety of teaching strategies in the classrooms to address the variety of learning styles. (783)

Subjects are currently being interrelated and integrated. The current reporting system has computer-generated comments (1042)

groupings, an emphasis on community schools, an increase in parent involvement and the initiation of school-based teams, the redefining of the librarian's role, and the initiation of advisory roles for students and teachers. A few respondents said that they have changed the focus of their content to promote global and multicultural awareness. Many respondents identified changes in approaches or methods such as collaborative learning, emphasis on the writing process, literature-based reading programs, active learning, student self-evaluation, integrated reading and writing activities, and activities that promote critical and creative thinking.

However, some respondents stated that many of the intents stated in *The Intermediate Program* are congruent with their own, but that there are pragmatic factors which influence their day-to-day work and restrict the implementation of such a program.

Canada's cultural-mosaic nature has sprouted multicultural education, ESL classes, and Cultural Awareness days in Elementary Schools. (655)

We work on building self-esteem. We also work on many integrated themes. Our evaluation methods are changing with the times. (109)

I think that most teachers try to see that individual students learn to the best of their ability. We are overwhelmed at times because of the social and ethnic backgrounds of students. These influences allow little or no support to the school system. Teachers become frustrated. (11)

Unless there is more expertise in the classroom, learning deterioration could be a real thing. The teachers will need to be retrained. (120)

(The Intermediate Program is) philosophically wonderful but the practicalities of today's teaching situation make it nearly impossible to carry off. The "ideal" is great, but where is the financial support? The intent of the Program will address some of the ... concerns but the support system must be in place first. (290)

The Philosophy, Goals, and Position Statements

Respondents are asked to express their views about how effectively *The Intermediate Program* achieves its intention of being learner-focused. Then, they are asked to comment on the strengths and weaknesses of the goals and position statements.

Most respondents agree with the intents of the philosophy, goals, and position statements presented in *The Intermediate Program*. They do, however, express concern that there is a lack of congruence among the Primary, Intermediate, and Graduate Programs. They feel this issue should be addressed to give more attention to the transitional phases of *The Intermediate Program*. Moreover, while enthusiastic about the Program, many respondents have concerns about its implementation. Some respondents did not answer the questions asked, but focused on issues of class size, funding, and resources.

Philosophy and Rationale

Evident in the responses is a general support for the philosophy and rationale presented in *The Intermediate Program*. Many people endorse the learner-focused approach, which supports Active Learning; the teaching of individuals and not subjects; lifelong learning as a goal; the flexibility of curriculum to support the variety of needs of students and teachers; and the emphasis on self-directed learning, as well as the implied school-level autonomy and professional empowerment that this position engenders. Many comments support the view that "the philosophy and goal statements are clear and supportable." (15)

Several respondents said that, although they agree with the general thrust of the Program, some positions are out of touch with classroom realities or are "Utopian." Others point out that the use of phrases such as "care deeply and act wisely" may be "a little too emotional in tone for a philosophy" (1177) and perhaps treads on territory that does not rightly belong to the schools. Others suggest that "this is not a true statement of philosophy. The word 'believe' is absent." (257) Some raised questions about the meaning of particular statements: "What does 'global vision' really mean? What is the intent of all the discussion on self-esteem?" (6) Others question students' ability to meet the challenges described: "... few students have the self-motivation." (1874)

The philosophy does recognize the power of the teacher to make the necessary decisions to meet the needs of children. (628)

The learner-focused philosophy is a significant strength of the draft. (144)

The basic philosophy is good; it provides a foundation for change. (24)

Strengths lie in goals and philosophy. They look at the whole child involved in Active Learning. (127)

I am sold on this Program and hope that it has a chance to fly. (738)

The Program is chock-full of highfalutin' ideals we can all heartily applaud. (828)

I am uneasy about the sudden change of philosophy as students begin the Graduation Program. I want to know how, within the framework of The Intermediate Program, I am expected to prepare students for this? (21)

It should be noted that a few respondents reject *The Intermediate Program* for philosophical reasons. Some questioned the learner-focused position of the document: "The philosophy is too learner-focused. Many students don't know what they want to study or may not be inclined to do so." (140)

Some respondents were concerned about the limitations of the philosophy. They objected that the Graduation Program does not "fit" with the Primary and Intermediate Programs. Many suggested the need for an umbrella statement to unite the three Programs and provide a rationale for the shift in position at the Graduation level.

A large number of respondents expressed support for the philosophy, but attached caveats, most of which were related to implementation.

The following chart summarizes the responses to the question "*The Intermediate Program* is intended to be a learner-focused program. Based on what you have read, does the Program reflect this intention?"

Part C: Question 1

	Of Those Who Responded to Part C (N=329)	Of The Total (N=350)
Yes	68%	64%
No and Uncertain	26%	25%
No Response	6%	11%

Consistently, the majority agree that the Program is learner-focused. The majority (62%) is not statistically significant so that inference to overall agreement with the question cannot be implied. Note that the decrease in "Yes" votes over the entire sample of 350 is due to increased non-response (6% to 11%), and not to an increase in "No and Uncertain." The anecdotal comments imply general agreement.

Goals

In many responses, the group or individual responding applauded the Program, commending the goals for supporting a learner-focused curriculum. They expressed pleasure because "the goals strive to develop a well-rounded individual who is encouraged to recognize his or her own strengths in a wide range of areas, beyond the traditional emphasis on intellectual goals." (1012) In contrast, there are those who said that, in their

A student, although free to choose any Graduation Program course he (or she) chooses, has the right to fail in the next two years? This following a philosophy that states that retention is inconsistent with the concept of Continuous Progress! (196)

The current document is very much a state-of-the-art position paper on education. It is exciting to think that this philosophy could be turned into reality... we need a document that is more practical, for the community to understand and support the Program. (26)

The document is clear, rational, and covers evaluation extensively. The problem lies in time for keeping records, organizing them and summarizing them. (2235)

Draft does a good job of detailing philosophy, goals, and position statements, but does not tell us how to run such a program. We need concrete, practical details. We feel like the Ministry has "conceived it and we have to deliver it." (379)

These goals are what we... have taught at home. We know and understand that these goals need to be in place. (1695)

These goals are all humanistic and are therefore appropriate for a learner-focused program. They allow for developmentally appropriate, open-ended, integrated learning activities. (1635)

view, the goals are too broad, too all-encompassing, and, as far as they were concerned, "unrealistic." To this, some added that the goals impinge on parents' rights and responsibilities and go beyond what it is reasonable to expect from the school system. One respondent expressed frustration by saying: "Have we become social workers, curing the ills of the world? What next? Will we be performing simple surgery or dispensing sacraments? We are constantly being asked to do other people's jobs." (814)

The Program goal should be intellectual development, the other goals stated should be stated as learning outcomes of the major goal, thus allowing teachers to concentrate on what they know best, at the same time bringing awareness of the importance of these other goals as outcomes of the educated citizen. (196)

The following chart summarizes responses to the question: "In your opinion, are these goals appropriate for a learner-focused program?"

Part C: Question 2

	Of Those Who Responded to Part C (N=329)	Of The Total (N=350)
Yes	65%	61%
No and Uncertain	24%	22%
No Response	11%	17%

Consistently, the majority agree that the goals are appropriate for a learner-focused Program. The majority (61%) is not statistically significant so that inference to overall agreement to the question cannot be applied. The anecdotal comments suggest that the majority do agree that the goals are appropriate to a learner-focused Program.

Response to the Intellectual Goal was the most controversial. Many asserted that the schools' main responsibility has always been the intellectual development of children, and this should not change. Others argued that the goals need to be placed in the context of the home and community, which share the responsibility. Some respondents expressed the concern that students' intellectual development will suffer due to the emphasis placed on "whole" pupil development in the document.

By dividing the goals into six separate subsets, teachers may decide to emphasize only intellectual development or over-emphasize the other goals to the detriment of intellectual development. (628)

The emphasis on intellectual development is still the primary goal of education. This must be firmly stated. (1928)

(The emphasis should be) 10% for each of the first five goals and 50% on Intellectual Development. (1875)

Intellectual should not be the major goal as the Program is geared towards a holistic approach. (356)

I feel my work is validated by the addition of emotional, social, physical, and Artistic and Aesthetic Goals along with Intellectual Development. I feel that the goals exist as a recognition of the multiplicity of learning and teaching that goes on in schools today. (21)

Closely related, the order of the goals was questioned by some and approved by others. Those who questioned the order wanted the Intellectual Goal listed first to be congruent with statements in *The Year 2000*. Those who approved of the order said that the Program's focus on the importance of all goal areas is a positive aspect of the Program and

We assume there is no order in goal areas. If there is an order, e.g., emotional first -- then please give the rationale. (11)

supported this position with comments about their belief in and commitment to holistic, child-centred learning. A few respondents said they felt that their work was validated by the position taken in the document. Some stipulated that, if the goals have an order, then "state it, or list them alphabetically as in the Primary document."

Frequently, respondents pointed out that, in their view, emotional and social development should be combined under one heading, as in the Primary document, to keep the goals of the two Programs congruent. Some respondents raised the broader issue of the lack of congruence among the three Programs.

Considerable discussion centred on how to implement the goals. Respondents expressed concerns such as: "The goals are too undefined (fuzzy) to aim for" (205) and "We have concerns about how to assess emotional and social growth in those goal areas... It is very difficult for teachers to make subjective statements that can be documented in these sensitive areas." (144) Many respondents raised concerns about the clarity of the goals in the aesthetic and artistic area, such as: "The Aesthetic and Artistic Goals do not appear to explain themselves - wonder, explore, create, respond, and reflect?" (4)

Some people raised questions about how the implementation of the goals will influence their roles. For example, many counsellors responded positively to the goals but wondered how their jobs might be influenced: "The emphasis on learning outcomes in the affective domain was in the past the specific responsibility of school counsellors [and now] will be incorporated into all strands of the new curriculum... It is very clear that we need to redefine our role within this new structure." (1540)

In the returns, considerable discussion focused on the clarity and usefulness of some goal statements. For example, in response to the Emotional Goals, some questioned the use of the word "defensible" in the phrase "socially defensible ways." A frequent

The debate continues as to the following: Whether to include Social and Emotional as separate or combined goals. For blending, the argument is that they are too difficult to separate for assessment purposes. For maintenance as separate goals, the argument is based on Maslow - that we must be emotionally secure first in order to succeed at the rest. (148)

I applaud the goals of the Intermediate Program although I am somewhat uncertain about the lack of congruence of the Primary and Graduation Programs when compared to the Intermediate Program. It would appear that an educational program for a single school system should be consistent throughout. (1013)

In terms of all aspects of human development the list of constituents is incomplete. Surely spiritual development is crucial to human development. Nevertheless, I do not believe the "school" should attempt to evaluate growth in all areas. (280)

They (the goals) are appropriate, but we are in need of direction to refocus our teaching to reflect the increased emphasis on emotional and social development and responsibility. (205)

It is difficult to interpret what the teacher's function as a role model [would be] in the promotion of social and emotional growth. It is not clear whether the teacher is thought of as a neutral mentor for students or whether there is latitude to allow for teachers to see themselves as real people and present themselves that way to the students (144)

suggestion was to replace it with "justifiable." Others argued, "Do we defend emotions? Does this mean to understand and express emotions in socially *acceptable* ways?" (108)

Some said that the document should make it clear that there is a need for balance between process and content learning. Several respondents expressed a concern that the document puts too much emphasis on process, and that the statement on Intellectual Development, in particular, implies that there is no need for "rigour" or a place for content in learning. Others made comments about how the goals can be used across various content areas; for example: "They all seem good on paper. But it will be artificial to try to enforce them in all subjects. It is difficult to push Aesthetic and Artistic development in math, for example... Some goals simply do not apply in every subject." (117)

While many wanted the goals reduced in scope because there are too many to assess, others suggested additions; for example: that the goals should include statements about spiritual and ethical development; and "The goals seem to miss the intelligence and discipline necessary for productive work in the Arts." (109)

In summary, many respondents agree that the goals presented in *The Intermediate Program* are appropriate for a learner-focused program. Further, many respondents agree with these intents. They state that the Program's focus on the importance of all goals supports the philosophy of a child-centred, holistic-learning environment. However, there are disparate opinions about how these goals should be implemented. Some feel that the goal of Intellectual Development should be made a priority as stated in *The Year 2000* since other goals are outside of or secondary to the school's role and responsibility for intellectual development. Others disagree.

Some respondents express concern over the lack of congruence among the Primary, Intermediate, and Graduate Programs with respect to Goals and Philosophy. Others believe the goal statements in the Intermediate document should state the priority of goals -- if any -- and should provide practical suggestions on how teachers can implement them, particularly across subject areas. Collectively, the responses presented a spectrum of views about the goals, but clearly, many respondents want more clarity brought to the philosophy and goal statements in the revision of the Program document.

While they appear to be appropriate, the problem would seem to be the implementation of the practices that would lead to the attainment of these goals. (1551)

Yes, but I feel strongly about "how" we are going to implement this program with 25-30 students, plus all the Special Needs Students. We need to think seriously about these aspects. (1725)

Position Statements

In response to the question "Is the intention of each position statement clear?: many respondents simply said "yes" or "no." Some respondents lauded the statements: "Each position statement is clearly and successfully stated." (1510) Others admitted that the position statements were critical to their understanding of the document, but said that some statements were so ambiguous that many interpretations were allowed and this confused them. Others, who disagreed with a particular position or had concerns about its implementation, gave reasons for their view or suggested a rewording of the statement. The question of consistency of position statements among the Primary, Intermediate, and Graduation documents appeared frequently in the responses. Several respondents requested that there be more emphasis on the teacher as "the guiding force," while others stated directly that, in their view, the Program is too learner-focused.

ACTIVE LEARNING

Many respondents said that the statements on Active Learning were clear, "really concise" (1067), and many heartily supported them for reasons such as: "This is based on 30 years of solid research that students learn by doing" (1238) Some respondents approved of the position but raised questions about how Active Learning will affect the teachers' role: "What does this mean in terms of teacher direction? More guidelines to teachers [are needed]," (918) and "How will the major shift in the role of the teacher be brought about to facilitate the 'guide on the side' practice rather than 'the sage on the stage?' " (1238) Several respondents expressed concern about how teachers evaluate in such environments. Others wondered about the availability of time and resources needed to train teachers for this change. A few respondents disagreed with the ideas, saying that students are not capable of making such decisions.

CONTINUOUS LEARNING

Many respondents stated that they had difficulty understanding the difference between Continuous Learning and Continuous Progress: "How do you separate Continuous Learning from Continuous Progress?" (357) To describe their concern, many respondents used phrases such as: "very nebulous" and "too much jargon." As one respondent put it, "Abstract position statements need to be [made] concrete, [written] clearly, and be focused -- clear up [these] statements and clarify the language used." (112) However, many approved of the

Many students learn only this way. (400)

Is the active learner equipped to direct his or her learning, i.e., taking into consideration ability level? Concerns exist with the unmotivated student. (148)

If students decide what they want to learn, is this not going to mean the lowest common denominator? (117)

It is the teacher who creates opportunities for students to learn, to make sense of their world, to share and respond. Active learning celebrates the role of both the teacher and the student in learning. Therefore, it would be inappropriate for learner-focused instruction to be reduced to a narrow view of instruction represented by skills-based units or packaged learning. Learner-focused instruction does not mean individualized learning packages. (723)

Continuous Learning supports a learner-focus... it allows for the development of thinking at individualized levels and supports social and emotional development. (1281)

One serious weakness is the explanation of the role of retention in the position statement on Continuous Learning. Teachers will need more direction on how far out of step with their peer group a student should be allowed to get in terms of their growth in the major goal areas. (141)

statements on Continuous Learning because they are "learner-focused" rather than curriculum-focused, and they acknowledge that "new learning is based on prior knowledge."

Many of those who supported the idea of Continuous Learning put riders on their statements of agreement, such as that the philosophy is good but teachers need training; for example: "Teachers require a new set of strategies to enable them to plan appropriate learning experiences with individual students in mind," (42) and "the intention is clear but its implementation is not." (10) Many said that they need a clear picture of how Continuous Learning will look in the classroom. Others said that although they agree with the idea there are limitations to what they can do because of various working conditions, such as class size and funding.

Some respondents described the possible negative results for students from the application of the principle of Continuous Learning to subjects in which learning is cumulative, such as Math or French. Others raised the question of how Continuous Learning might affect students who transfer in and out of the province.

CONTINUOUS PROGRESS

Some respondents simply expressed support for the statement. Others applauded the position. Some offered suggestions to make the statement clearer: "In the discussion on Continuous Progress, emphasis should be given to the role of students as planners. Students need to be actively involved in the design of their learning." (737)

Many expressed concerns about how it will manifest itself in classroom practice: "Does Continuous Progress mean that students will go through school with their same peer group?... What do teachers do in the case where a student is making very little progress and is soon experiencing a very wide discrepancy between his or her own growth and that of the peer group?" (356) There were many calls for guideposts and standards from

With Continuous Learning and Continuous Progress -- what about students transferring in and out of province? Continuous progress is idealistic... we would need smaller classes and clearer examples of Continuous Progress. [There is a] strong need for "signposts" and "standards" and "ground to be covered." The individual curriculum [idea is] too vague and open-ended. (96)

Continuous Learning: "learn at their own rate" -- we agree with the philosophy, but have concerns about implementation and teacher time. Need strategies. (154)

Continuous Learning: Needs to be some clear documentation of expected and mastered skills. (218)

Continuous Learning is negated by the Graduation Program (and the statement on) Continuous Progress is not clear. (278)

Working at their own speed means working dead slow or not working at all for such teens (the "underclass" of teens who believe in the "non-work" ethic). Will the Year 2000 programs increase their numbers into a snowballing effect toward the emergence of a dominant non-work-ethic group in our public school system? (916)

Students will feel confident, secure, and cared for. (76)

Continuous progress is the ideal: How can this be realized? (1717)

How will Continuous Progress be implemented and not become a paperwork nightmare? (120)

Continuous Progress will not work within the present structure of a Jr. High School. It will require flexible timetables. [We are] concerned that articulation between the levels locks up the entire system. (148)

Page 25: Continuous Progress - If a student changes school, how can he adjust if each teacher does something different, without unity from school to school or within a district? Some teachers will do anything they want any year of the program. There will be no unity. A student changing school may already have studied this point before or, on the contrary, may have missed a whole needed unit. (117)

teachers; for example: "There still needs to be some guidelines for standards of work. What should students accomplish by a certain age? Are we just going to continue advancing students who will continue to have difficulty mastering certain materials? Is this truly Continuous Progress?" (109)

Others expressed anxiety: "Again, [our group] expressed anxieties -- if we are not able to live up to these statements; e.g., [we have] some fears that Continuous Progress may lead to an erosion of standards... (Parents have already said that to teachers - why should they try if they know they will pass?)." (175)

Some respondents were unaccepting of the position because, in their view, it does not prepare students for the realities of the world: "This is an outrageous idea. Students must have defined limits of what is expected of them. They need motivation and reward. Letter grading is absolute. It is concrete. It is easily understood. If a student has not fulfilled a certain amount of learning and work by a set time, he must not be rewarded or promoted to a higher level of learning... Sooner or later, there must be a day of reckoning, or university entrance requirements would not be met" (5) and "The real world has deadlines and production quotas. People need to be on schedule, with material prepared. This factor is not addressed in 'Continuous Progress' and 'Continuous Learning.'" (70)

Others stated that they were philosophically opposed to the idea: "Continuous Progress is a metaphor that depicts learning as a progression along a continuum. It ignores the cyclic nature of learning in which the learner repeatedly returns to an idea, a concept to have the understanding enriched by other learning. As a teacher, I am wary of such a naive perception of learning (i.e., a continuum) when cited as a fundamental belief on which to build a program of instruction." (21)

Parents' views were diverse on the issue of Continuous Progress; for example, responses ranged from: "I don't think it accomplishes anything for a

Continuous Progress: Unrealistic for teachers to be expected to assist each student individually if all students are working at different rates, especially with teaching loads of 150 to 200 students. Not comparing students may result in complacency for all students. (120)

Self-esteem important; but personal responsibility and rights of others are every bit as important and cannot be minimized. One cannot meet every student's need at every moment. (128)

Parents Comments:

I strongly agree [with] the dropping of this process [failing students] to let the child grow at his own pace. (988)

Children need to be with their peer group so they can socialize, discuss and learn with a group at the same level of development. Their intellectual needs should be met within the classroom setting, but I feel "bright" or gifted children are often ignored and not challenged. (939)

Children should progress at their own level - grades should be irrelevant until the child is ready to graduate (145)

Repeating or skipping sends out very strong messages of being acceptable or not. (375)

child to repeat a grade," (350) to "Real life is a series of failure and success... To deny the student the right to fail and learn from his mistakes is denial of a fact of life." (875)

The notion of Continuous Progress is both revered and disputed, with many people requesting clarity and asking questions about the concept and how to implement it. These questions may provide useful information for the Program Team as they revise this position statement.

INTEGRATION AND CURRICULUM INTEGRATION

Integration and curriculum integration were raised as issues in various parts of the responses. A few responses focused on the clarity of the positions as stated, but most dealt with multiple issues. The majority of those who did focus on clarity said that the section is not clear. The information gathered from responses on integration and curriculum integration is included in "The Curriculum and Assessment Framework," pages 31-39.

LEARNING DESCRIPTORS

As they did about integration, people expressed diverse views on the Learning Descriptors and many said that the statement is not clear enough. Some respondents supported the position, saying that they appreciate the idea of describing learning by using descriptors as opposed to "measuring achievement using intended learning outcomes." Others said that the Learning Descriptors need to be simplified but, some added, "The overall message is excellent." (14) Many of those who said that the statements were not clear explained why they disagree with the use of descriptors. The issue here appears to be less one of clarity than one of difference over what connotes standards. Some described the Learning Descriptors as "wishy-washy," or not firm enough to be used for measurement. Others expressed the view that "the descriptors are weak. If we allow descriptors to provide a reference for instructional planning, then they become expected outcomes. This loop argument must be overcome. The best way is to get rid of the second paragraph and thus avoid contradictions,"

Regardless of the various approaches to learning there will always be some students that could benefit from repeating a grade. Social and emotional immaturity are two examples. (660)

Sometimes it is necessary to repeat material to fully understand it. Children who have failed in the past have often been spurred on to work harder. (234)

A strength -- they describe rather than prescribe instruction. (1392)

I am presently using the Language Arts Learning Descriptors. I find that they are extremely useful and are based on processes and the whole student. (1700)

I still think they will prescribe learning to some extent. (46)

Sounds good - Reserve decision until I have used them for a while. Weakness - Educating parents to be satisfied without relative information about their children.

Learning Descriptors - too many, how do we assess all these? Are they measurable? Shouldn't they be called outcomes? This needs major clarification. (10)

Learning descriptors appear to be clear. Whether they will be easy to implement is another matter due to time involved in the bookkeeping. Each teacher must have their own computer to effectively handle the bookkeeping involved. (29)

(918) or that they are "too vague, and ambiguous. [We] need standards and clarity." (357)

Some respondents see the use of Learning Descriptors for reporting and planning as liberating for themselves and beneficial to students: "They address a broad range of learning with less emphasis on product," (1240) while others see the use of descriptors as having the potential to undermine their authority and lessen their control: "teachers will lose all authority (small already) in the eyes of parents and students." (117) Others see the use of Learning Descriptors as a burden added to an already burdened day: "How will I report in the detail required when I teach 180 students?" (93) The number of student contacts per day is a problem for many teachers: "The logistics are mind-boggling." (25)

Again, the comments made and questions raised provide focus for the revision of the document and a challenge for the Team.

NATIVE LEARNERS

Many respondents approved the statement with comments such as "Well done!" and "Well expressed!" Some addressed the implications for more involvement with the Native community: "There appears to be a great need to involve Native people to a greater degree in school affairs. In a small community, will there be too great a demand on so few resource people?" (274) Several identified the need to provide in-service for teachers and administrators to increase their awareness: "A lot of schools and administrators don't have these qualities. They'll need a good deal of in-service, support, and time to bring their own knowledge, skills, and attitudes up to speed." Other respondents suggested that the position statement on Native Learners should be part of Multiculturalism; and that there is a need for more information on Native language education and its relationship to the teaching of other languages.

One respondent invited the Native Indian parents to explain what they wanted for their children. They said: "They need skills that are useful; A child has

If teachers are supposed to write comments in understandable language, why not write the Learning Descriptors this way and allow us to use them. This would preserve uniformity of reporting. The lack of uniformity that could develop with teachers rewriting the descriptors may be as bad as with letter grades. (154)

Learning Descriptors are described more in terms of what they are not, but really left very unclear as to what they are, and how they will be used. (196)

Appears overwhelming. Must be specific so all will interpret the same way. Use of descriptors to be indicated (353)

Learning Descriptors: Outrageous idea. Certain content must be covered to continue education after Grade 12. You will turn out multitudes of ignorant, uneducated blue-collar workers, not scholars. (5)

Learning Descriptors: need clarification. Will Learning Descriptors have equal value? Some appear to be more important than others. How much detail is going to be provided under "Learning Descriptors"? (96)

The statement is clear. We should all learn what we can about Native culture and should encourage Native teachers, locally developed curriculum and so on. The statement recognizes Native peoples as a unique and valued part of our society. (1423)

The position statement does not indicate who is qualified to teach accredited Native language programs or mention the involvement of local Indian bands. The position statement does not indicate whether or not Native language education should be taught separately or within the public school system, or whether Native language education should be open to everyone. (737)

Increase number of Native personnel in system. Programs designed for Natives will not make programs valued by others. Offer programs for everyone on Native Studies (148)

Page 28 - the statement that the Native language program is an acceptable alternative to French is in direct contradiction to the statement on page 36 - that it would only be offered in the place of French in the early years (26)

to learn to do for himself or [herself]; They need to be independent when they are adults; They cannot be afraid; They have to know how to survive on their own; They have to think for themselves." (246) The views of Native educators and others are summarized in Appendix 1: "Summary of Group Responses."

GENDER EQUITY

Most of those responding found the statement to be clear and supported the ideas as stated. Several respondents made statements to the effect that males are not treated equitably in the position statement. Some teachers raised the question of the implications of the gender equity position statement for physical education classes; for example, does this mean that coeducational classes should be mandated across the board? A few respondents said that the position statement is unnecessary as they do not believe that there is a "societal imbalance." Several respondents pointed out that as with Native Learners and Multiculturalism, they will need more background in these areas to increase their understanding of the issues and how to deal with them. One such issue is the conflict created while trying to respect the values of some cultures and the values inherent in gender equity.

MULTICULTURALISM

Many respondents praised the statement, saying that it recognizes the need to address Multiculturalism and that the dignity and pride of various cultures is clearly recognized. Others said that the statement is too broad and that the topic is too important to receive such vague treatment. Others questioned why the section on Native Learners was not included in this section, some commenting that "Status is being given to one group. Is this a political issue? Perhaps a better name than Multiculturalism could be used to encompass both." (357) Others expressed frustration that unless there is respect for all cultures in the home, the school will have difficulty changing attitudes.

If Native language programs are an "acceptable alternative to French as a second language," then why not the same concessions for other ethnic groups? (140)

Perhaps more strongly stated are the recommendations that the Native Intermediate members stated; i.e., Native Language. (659)

If gender equity means female equity (as your statement appears to), then perhaps you should change the title to Female Equity, or remove or rewrite this section. (4)

It is good to emphasize that girls should do well in Math/Science, but don't ignore the boys. (224)

Not possible to do both [Gender Equity and Multiculturalism], as many cultures don't believe or practise gender equity. (353)

But, who will teach students how to recognize gender and racial bias when most teachers can't recognize areas that need improvements? Who in B.C. has developed local gender programs that they are teaching? (2)

Because of biological differences, it is essential that the statement be more clearly worded. (918)

Native learners should be part of Multiculturalism, not separate (43)

Multiculturalism: Important, but if not required at home, attitudes will be very difficult to change. What does this mean? "Raising the level of cognitive complexity?" (91)

Cooperative groups -- good strategy, more resources are needed about various cultures. (356)

ASSESSMENT, EVALUATION, AND REPORTING

Assessment, evaluation, and reporting were major issues running through all areas of most responses. Few responses focused on the clarity of the positions; most dealt with multiple issues. The information gathered from responses on Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting are included in "The Curriculum and Assessment Framework," pages 31-39.

STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Many respondents were pleased with the clarity of the position statement. Also, for many, there is concern that the learning disabled will be lost in this context, with many such students unable to function or learn without "structure from the teacher." Fear was expressed that standards will be minimal, that many students will not have success outside the system, that the skill level will be "really low." Many respondents were concerned that the resources will not be in place and class sizes will not be reduced to accommodate mainstreaming. People asked: "Who develops Individualized Education Plans (IEPs)?" and "What is the role of the learning assistance teacher?"

Several respondents commented that the rationale for including these students in the regular classroom is not given. Some respondents expressed concern about what is to be done with at-risk students who "choose not to learn" in spite of teachers' attempts to motivate them. Some raised questions about whether or not there will be special classes.

Several respondents like the position on special needs students, but identified issues they want addressed. There will be an increased need for communication between primary and intermediate teachers to ensure that the program for special needs students runs smoothly; there will be an increased need for funding to support efforts to accommodate these students in the classroom; and there will be a continuing need to set class size restrictions in classes that contain special needs students. One respondent commented: "The quotation on page 30 is placed inappropriately. It makes it appear that understanding individual differences is the prime reason for integrating exceptional children. Surely this is not the intent." (1177) The views of the specialists who work with special needs students are summarized in Appendix 1: "Summary of Group Responses."

PROGRAM TRANSITIONS

Most comments focused on the transition from the Intermediate Program to the Graduation Program. Many think that this issue requires more discussion. They do not see a viable transition to the Graduation Program, because students are moving from a learner-focused and Continuous Progress system to one that is "content-laden and competitive." Some respondents addressed the issue from the point of view that the Graduation Program should be changed to match the Intermediate Program more closely. Others think that the Intermediate Program should be considered two parts of the continuum: early and late Intermediate. Early Intermediate would be more

Transition from the Primary, Intermediate, and Graduation Programs has been articulated as seamless. To be successful, the Intermediate Program will have to progress from a system of evaluation similar to that of the Primary Program, in the early Intermediate years. A system of evaluation in the later Intermediate years will need to provide a closer match to the Graduation Program, unless the Graduation Program becomes a closer match to the Intermediate Program. (151)

Include more emphasis on the need for counselling in the last years of the Intermediate Program. Include in the Program document an outline of the Graduation Program indicating the choices students have, so that Intermediate teachers get a sense of the whole program. (628)

like Primary and late Intermediate would provide a transition to prepare students for the "realities" of the Graduation Program. Still others suggest that the first eleven years of schooling should be looked at as one continuous flow. A few respondents suggested that the P1 to P4 and I1 to I7 be changed to "year in school." Frequently, in response to program transition, the role of the counsellor was discussed. Several suggested that there may be more need for counselling services to assist students in their decision-making.

RESOURCE CENTRES

In the response sample, no one said that this position statement is unclear. Several respondents did say that the statement is not strong enough to underscore the importance of the impact that information expansion and technology will have on children's future lives and work experience. Some said that the statement could be improved by the addition of comments that link the use of the resource centre to the acquisition of literacy and to the process of life-long learning.

Most respondents focused on the strengths and weaknesses of the position taken in the statement. Generally, people were pleased about the recognition and importance given to the resource centre and to the collaborative role that the librarian plays. However, concerns were expressed about the resources currently available and the additional expectations that the new Program will put on the present resources, both human and material. Many expressed the concern that the lack of time for planning and the current formula for allocation of teacher-librarians to schools prohibits the realization of the intentions of *The Intermediate Program*. As well, some respondents stated that there were schools in their district that had no school library facilities and that those that did were having difficulty meeting the current demands on their services.

The views of teacher-librarian groups are summarized in Appendix 1: "Summary of Group Responses."

When all subjects have been "stranded" and integrated, suddenly we are prescriptive with Business Education 10? A student, although free to choose any Graduation Program courses, has the right to fail in the next two years? This following a philosophy that states that retention is inconsistent with the concept of Continuous Progress! (196)

Concern re: transition to Graduation Program. How will standards be established and maintained? Concern that there should be a body of knowledge to be learned. Need curriculum guidelines. (353)

While the document suggests an important role for school resource centres and teacher-librarians, there is no definition or articulation of the nature of these expectations. (828)

The position statement about the resource centres needs to be expanded to clarify what is needed and how students will be using it. (659)

The statement is incomplete, missing several key elements that were better described in both The Primary Program (page 37) and the Language Arts/English Guide (page 24). Overall, partnership does not receive sufficient emphasis. No connection is made between the resource centre and literacy development, nor between the Program and developing students' motivation to become life-long learners. (1174)

The resources of most school library resource centres are aging because budgets are not keeping pace with price increases in the publishing and technology fields. It is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain the resources, let alone build up the collections to meet increased user demands and wider curricular topics. (343)

TECHNOLOGY

Not many respondents made comments about the position statement on technology. Those who did either supported the statement by saying that it was congruent with the Program's goals and that they were pleased that technology is not seen as a means to an end, or they criticized it for being "skimpy" and treating too lightly such an important topic. There were, however, comments on technology in various other parts of the responses, mostly about the need for computers. Frequently, technology was mentioned in relation to special needs students, to the effect that more funding is required. Some respondents suggested that a computer would be useful for using Learning Descriptors and many would like to have the Program guide on disk. Others said that they need in-service in the area of technology in order to update their knowledge.

The use of computers in Music programs must be carefully and critically assessed to ensure the students are learning the goals of the Music Program. (1529)

There is the belief that there is and will continue to be a lack of funding to implement technological advances (1658)

In response to the question "Is the intention of each position statement clear?" 23% of those responding answered "Yes," and 18% did not respond to the question. Overall, the anecdotal responses to position statements on Continuous Learning, Continuous Progress, and Learning Descriptors indicate that respondents feel the document does not clearly define these statements nor adequately describe their implementation.

Many respondents approved of particular position statements. The position statements on Native Learners, Multiculturalism, and Gender Equity are generally well received. Some respondents feel the issue of Native Learners should be addressed in the position statement on Multiculturalism. While most praise the position statement on Multiculturalism, some feel it is too broad and vague and is outside the jurisdiction of the school. Many respondents believe teachers would require training in these areas and additional resources to implement the positions successfully.

Some approved of them theoretically but identified the need for retraining of teachers, the availability of manageable assessment tools, and so on, which in the view of many would be required if these changes to classroom practice and teacher and student roles were to be achieved. A small number of respondents did not agree with some statements, saying, for example, that students are not equipped to make decisions about their education or that Continuous Progress denies the realities of the "real world".

Responses to the statements on Program Transition and Special Needs Students suggested that more information would be helpful. The transition to the Graduation Program raised many questions to challenge the Program Team. As well, some feel that a clear rationale for including students with special needs in the regular classroom needs to be given in the document

The position statements on Resource Centres and Technology, although congruent with Program philosophy were thought by many to be stated too weakly.

The Curriculum and Assessment Framework

The Intermediate Program states that the Curriculum and Assessment Framework can help readers to examine the components of the framework, to explore the implications associated with the components, to recognize the relationships between the components, and to understand that the goals give *The Intermediate Program* its integrity. Respondents commented on the strengths, weaknesses, and usefulness of the framework.

Overall Response to the Framework

In response to the request for comment on the strengths and weaknesses of the framework, most respondents listed both. To describe the strengths, respondents frequently used the words: "flexible," "relevant," and "useful." Most comments about the weaknesses centred on issues of implementation: "The biggest drawback is that there is so much information and so little time for the practising teacher." (738)

Some respondents suggested that the framework could be improved through careful editing. Others suggested that it needed considerable work: "A framework should provide a structure to hang things on, and this is not the case in the sense that: the relationships among the components are not made clear, it is not shown how the 'goals give the Program its integrity'; and the pencil diagram does not promote understanding." (257) To make the framework more useful, some suggested that it contain more information on skills acquisition.

Several respondents made reference to the definitions of the curriculum provided. Some praised them. For example: "The task force views as a strength the fact that the curriculum is described variously as intended curriculum, experienced curriculum and attained curriculum." (1012) Others raised questions about why the definitions were there or why they were not used elsewhere. The Program Team might consider using the terms in other parts of the document.

Much of this is not new. But it is nice to see it in print from a Ministry organization. (186)

This framework addresses students' needs from a holistic point of view and attempts not to separate the various parts of the individual's learning. It gives specific examples of how the strands support goals; however, some strands need to ensure that they also provide examples. The involvement of students as responsible participants in their assessment is excellent. The assessment examples are excellent as are the student and teacher report examples. I think that assessment provides some valuable insights into new frameworks for assessment. (1510)

Yes, the information is interesting, informative, and inspirational. I look forward to further elaborations of attributes, strands, curricular integration, experiences, evaluation with more standardized (defined) terminology, formats, cross-referencing procedures, referencing charts, etc. A useful exercise for me in re-evaluating our approach and procedures. (1062)

In our view this was the most concrete section within this proposal. Delight with evaluation proposals... Applause for the emphasis on self-assessment, taking responsibility for learning, and promoting self-esteem. Practical suggestions for assessment techniques are valuable. The sample interviews, reports, learning descriptors are helpful. It will be a time-consuming process. Small classes are a must. (354)

The framework is largely philosophical, and some of the assumptions have to be re-examined. For example, the notion that parents and students will prefer anecdotal comments is questionable. The notion that subject areas will be integrated needs to be examined; there isn't any mention of research showing how such integration improves a student's knowledge base. (1454)

The Model

The model provides a reference to guide the planning of learning experiences. In response to the question of whether or not the model is helpful, the response was mixed. Those who found it useful made comments such as: "[It] does a good job of showing the relevance and integration of ideas (knowledge, skills, attitudes), some of which have long been seen as important, and others that have been newly introduced." (38) However, others found the framework difficult to follow because, in their view, it contains too many details, and needs to contain more practical terms in order to clarify the goals. Others suggested that it does not represent a program that is "fluid or flexible." For example: "The flow appears downward to 'Reports and Reporting to Parents.' Reporting to parents is not the culmination of the Program." (1177)

More than once, respondents suggested an alteration to the diagram in order to make it less linear and more dynamic. Several suggested other formats and some included sketches.

The responses imply that graphic material is useful for some, but not for others. This suggests that for a structured overview to be effective, its ideas should be presented both visually and in written form, with the text complementing the graphic.

Intermediate Program Goals: Clarification and Elaboration

Many respondents were positive about the thoroughness of this section, although a few said they found it incomprehensible. Some expressed the concern that the comments are generic, and therefore not useful.

A concern about the lack of order of the goals was a common theme in responses; for example: "The framework legitimizes all six developmental goals for young people. This is a positive step toward holistic education, but Intellectual Development should remain the main medium in schools for addressing the other important goals." (1185) Others valued the balanced view expressed in the document: "Intellectual Development depends on the other goals being stable. You can't learn your times tables if you are about to jump off a bridge." (499)

The model is clear. It works for visual thinkers. I question the vast distance between the printed page and educational practice. (1438)

Being parents who have little knowledge of curriculum delivery in the current system, it is difficult to understand the model. (1392)

We found the model helpful in understanding the components of the curriculum assessment framework and feel that it would help readers to obtain an understanding of the relationship among the framework's components. (567)

Model is confusing -- implies a stream or direction that may not have been intended; it contains unnecessary repetition of concepts and description. (994)

If it is explained to you by someone familiar with the model, then it may make a little sense. Perhaps show the whole model, then its component parts separately as they are explained, then put the model back together again at the end of this section. (196) (This group developed a model as a sample.)

The model is helpful, but a better understanding would be gained by having guest speakers address teachers during Professional Development workshops with appropriate release time. (1)

In putting it all together, some respondents seem bewildered as to the implications for classroom practice: "When reporting and evaluating, do we evaluate by strands or subjects? We are concerned that more and more specialists will be required to teach the subjects and to integrate them." (353) Others asked for examples to help them implement the Program.

The Strands

Some value as a reference the information contained in this section. One respondent recommended that pages 61 to 76 be "included in specific curriculum documents rather than in *The Intermediate Program*." (257) A frequent concern expressed was the structure of the strands. Many respondents cannot see the logic and question the arbitrary configuration that the four strands represent; for example: "The strands are not logical groupings. They are arbitrary. People with different biases or from different cultures, times, or backgrounds might group the curriculum differently." (994)

Attributes

The document explains that the purpose of the section on Attributes is to see how the parts fit together to create the "big picture." The request was to look at the uniqueness and similarities in the procedural and declarative knowledge of the subject areas to gain understanding of what gives each subject its integrity. In response, some expressed appreciation that the Program Team identified the attributes of each subject; however, many found some attributes to be vague. A few respondents found it confusing to see the Language Arts goals renamed as attributes. Another noted that the Program "goes to great lengths to show the commonalities between subjects and learning, but seems to separate them unnaturally in the Attributes section." (994)

The large picture could be provided by having all the common understandings on one page (a fold out). The same could be done with the attributes. (1510)

The attributes do not make the "big picture" clear. They're wordy and full of language not commonly used. They serve little purpose. (289)

Attributes of Social Studies need more work -- other skills besides critical thinking, problem-solving and decision-making. (220)

I find the "Attribute" section unclear, and therefore do not see how it helps with curriculum planning. (418)

The attributes for Music are skumpy. Although the Intermediate Committee does not give a lengthy explanation of the criteria for integration which include the need to maintain subject integrity, there is still a concern among music educators that Music will be used as a decoration. (684)

Integration

In the Program document, Part III, Curriculum Integration, begins with a reference to the position statements, then outlines topics under the headings "Integrating Learning Experiences," "Integration Within a Subject," "Integration of Two or More Subjects," "Criteria to Consider," and "Organizing Integrated Learning Experiences." This section includes the responses to the position statements on Integration and Curriculum Integration. The following summary describes the responses.

The integration of subjects based on commonalities will help our students to learn more, communicate what they have learned more effectively, and retain what they have learned longer. Learning will become more relevant as topics will not be taught in isolation... What is needed from the Ministry is a concrete model or hierarchy pattern of integrated thinking skills. (887)

Our chief concern about this section of the document is that curricular integration is already being perceived as the definitive attribute of the Intermediate Program. Teachers could come to feel that simply by combining two content areas they are implementing the Program. This content-based concept does not address the other types of integration mentioned in the document. (125)

A large number of respondents said that the position statement on Curriculum Integration needs to be

clearer. Some found the heading structure confusing. For example: "'Integration' is used twice as a term. Perhaps Integration should be given a different title so as not to be confused with Curriculum Integration!" (1734) Another stated, "the terms 'Continuous Learning', 'Integration', and 'Curricular Integration' must be differentiated." (1715)

Many supported the idea of integration -- some enthusiastically, some stating simply that "it is a positive idea," or "it makes sense." Others spoke of the benefits of using an integrated approach with students: "The connection between school setting and the real world builds on transfer [of learning] and ensures relevance ... Integration allows for continuous, differentiated learning and heterogeneous groups. Integration focuses on the whole child and has a sound pedagogical basis." And as a parent pointed out, "Students live in a world, not in isolation; therefore, learning needs to be connected to the real world." (923)

Some respondents said that, although they agree in principle, a more specific and practical definition of curriculum integration is required in the document to show how it relates to the strands or the learning descriptors. Some made specific requests for concrete models and examples of themes or units to show how integration "works" and what the teacher's role becomes in this context. Others, who agreed in principle, said that planning for an integrated curriculum is difficult for reasons such as "It requires more in-service and preparation time than is now available." (175)

Many teachers stated that they do not agree with the concept of curricular integration. People expressed concerns that the integrity of the subject areas would be lost. The phrase "watered-down" appeared frequently.

Some questioned the principle that "integration is viewed as a means of reflecting the nature of learning." They took issue with this view, saying that they are concerned about the "integrity" or the

The section in the document does not talk about the integrity of each subject being maintained. (1039)

At the secondary school level, we question the principle that curricular integration is viewed as a means of reflecting the nature of learning (16)

As The Intermediate Program points out, each discipline has its own attributes which make it a distinct way of knowing our world. Although there are common understandings that exist between subject areas, the BCETA is concerned that there be no erosion or disintegration of the Language Arts/English curriculum. Perhaps, the term "interdisciplinary" rather than "integrated" is a more appropriate term to describe the approach to learning recommended by The Intermediate Program. (723)

There is confusion between Integration and Curricular Integration. (70)

[The statement should] emphasize that not all subjects have to be integrated -- or can be or should be (353)

Learning is much more meaningful when a connection is made to the "real world" (347)

The Goals of Education state that students should "...acquire basic learning skills and bodies of knowledge..." Page 16, is this consistent with "...specifying discrete learnings within each subject has given rise to disintegration of personal learning and fragmentation of school experience"? Is there room in this for the integrity of a body of knowledge? (196)

Be aware of the danger of loss of skill development at the expense of thematic emphasis." (96)

Teachers at the upper Intermediate levels may be unable to attain sufficient expertise to offer learning experiences of a high quality in the broadened range of subject areas required for curricular integration. (993)

Integration statement is unclear, most of the paragraphs go far beyond a discussion of integration... must be completely rewritten to address "integration." (1182)

"primacy" of their content area. To some, the view expressed threatens their livelihood: "Integration should not be so pervasive that it destroys subject specialists." (140)

[If it is important] to master something well, isolate it, and concentrate all your skills toward it. This system is the converse -- water it down, mix it together, and hope for the best." (140)

There also seems to be a concern about the lack of recognition of the disciplines. Hence, the call for balance from a supporter of integration: "When the integrity of a subject is compromised by incorporating its essence into strands, some of the important learning outcomes of the Intermediate years is compromised. A balance of both integrated and discrete subjects is necessary for Mathematics, Literature, Affective Development, Music, and Social Studies." (42)

The emphasis now being focused on the learner rather than on curriculum content represents another large change in our way of thinking. Teachers will need to experiment with this concept before they will feel confident using it. They will need support of the administration in order to feel comfortable taking the risk to implement this concept. This is another area in which they will need in-service. (172)

To many, the issue is not so much a problem with belief as it is with the pragmatics of implementation. These respondents ask for the "nuts and bolts," -- samples, more specific guidelines, information to help them understand the ideas, and resources. Others maintain that smaller class size and funding are required before they can consider curriculum integration.

More clarification to explain, as there can be a wide range of interpretation as to what this term means and involves (353)

It is far easier to use themes and integration in the Primary grades than it is in the Intermediate. (1)

In response to this section, many respondents focused on the integration of special needs students in the regular classroom. They raised issues similar to those described in the position statement on Special Needs Students: Will the learning of the special child be enhanced? Will the learning of the regular students be affected negatively? Who will help teachers and administrators work out the practical logistics of the change?

Under Integration, will the Arts remain as important as areas which we now consider to be "core" or will they slowly become an addition to a new "core"? (68)

Connect learning in school to understanding of real world - meaningful - this is one method. This might mean the end of specialized programs, i.e. Minimum Essentials, Gifted and Talented, and so on. This will have obvious effects on "streamed" courses such as Math. (148)

Some respondents questioned the statement, "The kind of integration will be a matter of teachers' professional judgment." They asked: "Where is the consistency between schools and districts?" (1002) Other respondents are concerned that professional judgment based on students' interests will not lead to good education. In their view, it is the nature of individuals to take the easy way out, making it necessary for others to make their decisions for them: "If curriculum is based on the needs and interests of learners, is this not going to be one of

My concern is that parameters must be set when the final draft is published. Student "A" must be at a school where much integration of subjects is utilized, while student "B" attends a school where virtually no integration occurs. Some reasonable degree of consistency should result. Provisions should be made - down the road - for lots of communication between and among schools and districts to help determine what is working well and what isn't. (303)

the lowest common denominator?... Children are still children, even in the nineties: they will always choose the easy way out; they need structure and guidance. Only an adult-decided curriculum can work, or students will learn nothing. They are too young to decide what they should learn." (120)

Learner-Focused Assessment

The views on assessment and evaluation ranged from approval to approval with reservations, to total rejection. Those at both ends were the minority. Those who approved unconditionally saw benefits for students. Those with reservations saw obstacles to teachers such as a lack of knowledge of the processes involved, the clarity and usefulness of the descriptors, parent acceptance, and a concern about the extent of the workload. Those who rejected the positions on Assessment focused on issues of workload and implementation.

Some respondents found the Program's evaluation and assessment approach too student-centred, but voiced concern about the amount of time needed for collecting, writing, observing, and conferencing. Some people want specific outcomes and guide-posts. People generally support student self-evaluation but are concerned about the time this takes. Many felt extensive in-service is necessary to assist teachers in understanding how to approach these tasks.

As well, many respondents expressed strong concerns about the clarity of assessment information and the practicality of the procedures.

In addition, some expressed the concern that reporting is driving assessment and evaluation. The suggestion was made that "Reporting" and "Letter Grades and Anecdotal Comments" should be subheadings of "Classroom Assessment and Evaluation." (1177)

Integration - Heterogeneous grouping Mixed ability-groupings will let the class proceed at the rate of the slowest student. The slow learners need extra time with the teachers. (5)

With the complete integration of special needs students, how will the teacher address the needs of this diverse population? Special Needs Students can mean a student in a wheelchair or a severely mentally retarded child. The severity of the need, the impact the presence of the special needs child will have on the learning of the other children, and the impact on the responsibility of the teacher (probably untrained to deal with some of these problems) needs to be addressed before full integration is implemented. (196)

Assessment and evaluation principles are perceived to be a nightmare by many. (305)

We see validity in the methods of data collecting and evaluating which are described in the document. We suggest that many of us and many of our students' parents feel a comfort with the traditional pattern of testing and assigning letter grades and will be resistant to change. This is a problem which will need to be addressed in order for the Program to be effectively implemented. (172)

Assessment and Evaluation methods are learner-focused and reflect the intent of Program to build on student success in order to build a positive self-concept. (353)

Generally we appreciate the flexibility that the suggested assessment processes contain. We are hopeful that the lack of letter grades will have a positive impact on student motivation. (1320)

The involvement of students as responsible participants in their assessment is excellent. The assessment examples are excellent as are the student and teacher report examples. I think that assessment provides some valuable insights into new frameworks for assessment. (1510)

Oh my God! What are the other 29 students doing while I am interviewing and assessing little Johnny? And, contrary to popular myth, the majority of teachers are working long hours now. Like me, they must be wondering how and when all this assessment will take place. What has evolved in schools has evolved largely because it is functional. (22)

Reporting and Letter Grades

Although people agreed that there is need to improve students' self-esteem, many respondents said that "can-do" reporting may not provide complete or honest communication. One respondent observed: "[There is a] greater danger of intellectual dishonesty when reporting using anecdotal comments,... and we do not agree with the loss of letter grades -- the 'school of hard knocks' has its merits." (103) Many parents said that they will want to know in what areas their children need help. They said they will not be satisfied with knowing only what their children "can do." Indeed, parents said that they want to know where each child ranks in relation to clearly defined expectations. Relative to this, many teachers supported the move away from comparative reporting, but others said that parents will not accept it. Many teachers suggested a place on the report card to comment about areas where a child needs to improve, and to explain difficulties he or she may be having. In their view, constant positive comments to parents will give a false picture of the child's capabilities and achievements and, in the process, will not prepare the student for the "real world."

In addition, respondents stated that they foresee problems with using the proposed report card. Some said it is a waste of time writing out ideas that, in their view, can be covered more effectively with a checklist. Others said that seeing samples of exemplary reports will help them better understand the process. A few suggested that computer technology is necessary. The most frequently expressed concern linked the reporting procedure with workload.

Also, many respondents warned that anecdotal reporting will be exceedingly cumbersome at the late Intermediate level. There is a strong feeling that the familiar letter grade adequately informs parents and motivates students.

There were also mixed responses to the document's position on letter grades and anecdotal comments.

So much depends on the teachers. Confident, conscientious teachers will work well with new ways of assessing the students - for others, less experienced or capable it may be that true assessment and evaluation will not be done. (1287)

Assessment and Evaluation and Reporting: How can we be accountable to parents and students who want a "measure" of standing for their child? (38)

Assessments of how children are progressing in the system are a concern. Positive comments are good, but we also need to receive constructive criticism about our children if there is a problem area. We feel we need to know how our children are doing in comparison to district or provincial standards. (232)

Be realistic, not wishy-washy; students must learn to deal with the realities of life. Strengths and weaknesses must both be recognized. (96)

I agree that low letter grades can damage a student's self concept. However, there are academic students who find the letter grades an incentive. Perhaps a compromise could be made, such as include 'A', 'B' letter grades (perhaps C+ and C). Letter grades are a tool that can motivate parents to encourage students. Removing them, especially in Grade 6 and up, could reduce parent effectiveness in helping students (1426)

I have reservations about strictly anecdotal reports. Effective communication between parent/student/teacher is an integral part of the success of the Intermediate Program. Anecdotal reports are useful but often the language used is selective so as not to be blunt or to offend someone. Many parents/students have less competence with the language so that reports are misunderstood or there is reading between the lines. Often a letter grade is more easily understood, or a combination of anecdotal, letter grade and checklist is a balance in formal reports. (530)

No letter grades but anecdotal comments. Instead of all the verbiage, should the student not know exactly where he/she stands? We talk a lot about self-esteem, but if the student cannot for example add or divide, or utter French sentences, or does not understand science, should it not be said? Should a spade not be called a spade? Are we trying to fool everybody? Is it fair to go on beating around the bush saying all sorts of irrelevant things except the truth? Teachers will not be trustworthy if they do not indicate and say the truth, i.e. Johnny cannot read - yet we should not be asked to hide the truth of this behind 'But Johnny is very social and likes to amuse others, etc.'... This will be a farce and the community and parents will not like it. (117)

Reporting as outlined in the document with the student portfolios and checklists is going to be very difficult and time-consuming. (70)

A persistent issue raised is the optional use of letter grades: "You leave the option of letter grades open. Given all that you have said, you cannot do this and remain consistent with your goals." (2013) Other respondents liked the idea of being able to decide whether or not to use letter grades. Others said that the decision should be made at the Ministry level, or at least at the district level: "We would prefer a clear policy that addresses both early and late Intermediate and incorporates a transition to Graduation, rather than the vague suggestion of 'reconsideration.'" (1174) Others recommended that if letter grades are to disappear -- it should be a planned phase-out -- not an abrupt change.

Some respondents sent in students' comments about letter grades. Like the others, the responses varied. Those students who like letter grades do so for the following reasons -- letter grades tell them where they stand, they understand what they mean, and some get rewards for achieving good grades. Those who do not like letter grades said that "a paragraph" would communicate better how they are doing in school, and would lessen the feeling of competition in school and in the family.

Many respondents used the term "real world" to express concerns about the draft's position on letter grades and competition. Some respondents asked: How will students deal with failure in the real world? They made comments such as: "Can't we learn from failure?" (103), "We are moving to a world economy. Can our students compete in that world?" (267) The fact that the Graduation Program has letter grades influenced many respondents. Respondents stated: "How do students deal with failure after not experiencing it? When letter grades are introduced in the Graduation Program, will students be shocked?" and "How are students prepared for competition [needed] for college or university?" (153)

In summary, although the views expressed about the usefulness of the Curriculum and Assessment Framework ranged from highly positive to highly negative, the debate and discussion prompted people to reflect on current practices and to consider the implications of the suggested paradigm shift. For many, the framework is useful and "in its presentation gives a

Anecdotal reporting is difficult with a large group. Observation and recording requires a great deal of time -- with only one teacher it is difficult to chart each learner's progress. (1064)

I have seen convincing evidence that anecdotal, criterion-referenced reporting will provide meaningful assessment. (8)

Letter grades: ban them! Be stronger in your statement. (1067)

Students' Comments:

I think report cards should always have letter grades because [if not] the teachers can't tell the parents how their kids are doing. (170)

It would be hard to give up the five dollars for A's and the three dollars for B's. (179)

It is easier to read letter grades than paragraphs. (49)

It gives a symbol of your ability. (176)

[If there were no letter grades], I would not feel as if I were competing with others. (179)

Teachers can't evaluate student placement properly when a new pupil arrives with only an anecdotal report. (140)

Comments tell more about if you are working harder, or worse, but sometimes your grade doesn't change. (49)

Teachers should use written evaluations instead of letter grades because parents and teachers put you into categories: "A's," you are over here because you are smart, "C's" and "D's," you are down here because you are dumb. People wouldn't get grounded for having bad grades. You wouldn't be classified as the stupid one in the family if a brother or sister gets better grades than you do, and you wouldn't be compared to anyone. (50)

clear picture of the large idea." (1416) What many found lacking was the sense of how to use or apply the "large idea" in the "real world" of classrooms, provincial examinations, and entrance examinations.

Addressing the concerns about assessment, evaluation, and reporting presents a major challenge for the Program Team. Opinions on these topics range greatly, but the questions about how it might be accomplished are consistent.

Perhaps the best summary statements one could use for this section came in two group responses, one from a staff of teachers and the other from a group of students. The teachers observed: "We find the framework quite satisfactory but again teachers are looking for the 'meat' to put on the 'bones'... Perhaps it will only become meaningful when they begin to work with it." (351) And the students stated: "We conclude that you can't please everyone." (1878)

Implementation

While other sections of the response form requested comments and a critique of the document, the section on implementation asked questions about the reader's views about perceived benefits of the Program and implications they anticipate for current practice and ideas that might facilitate the implementation process. Most respondents answered the questions asked. However, some responses did comment on the entire section of the document.

Responses Describing the Major Benefits of the Program

BENEFITS FOR STUDENTS

Most of the responses concerning the Program's benefits for students seem to hinge on two interconnected ideas -- "ownership" of learning, and student "self-esteem." The respondents appear to see a close relationship between these ideas. Indeed, many of the responses suggest that they appreciate the shift in the focus of Intermediate education. Many respondents perceive the Program as a transfer of educational responsibility, or the ownership of learning, from the teacher to the student. "Being learner-focused will enable them [students] to have responsibility for their own education, and therefore [they will] take more interest in what they are doing." (196) Observes another teacher: "By focusing our attention on the individual learner and... his [or her] work, we will teach to the individual's needs." (353) The respondents suggest that the prime benefit of this responsibility transfer is a positive change in the learning "environment" or "situation." Many educators seem to believe that the Program will make the classroom less stressful by de-emphasizing the spectre of failure. As one group of teachers explained: "A less stressful learning environment [is created] due to [a] decreased emphasis on pass/fail." (96) These respondents seem to believe that reduced stress inspires students to "feel good about themselves." (29) Indeed, enhanced "self-esteem" is cited in survey after survey. Many respondents specified improved self-esteem as a benefit of the Program. And many other respondents used similar terms such as "self-concept" and "awareness" to describe the new Program's benefits for students.

However, the freedom which occasions the student being given responsibility for his or her own education is not considered beneficial by everyone. "Some students will feel very comfortable and happy in this non-competitive mode, but is this comfort good?" (153) asked one group of teachers and administrators. Later, the same group endeavoured to answer the question they had posed. "This is not reality," they wrote. "Some students need criticism, direction, and competition. Many students... are not mature enough to make educational decisions."

BENEFITS FOR TEACHERS

Just as the Program is perceived as promoting a certain educational freedom among students, respondents speculated that it will be equally as liberating for teachers. However, not all agreed that this new "autonomy" represented a beneficial step for the teacher or the student.

Virtually all educators acknowledged that the role of the teacher will change under the new Program. A good many consider this a positive challenge. Some state that it promotes "risk-taking," others that it promotes "flexibility" and "creativity."

Some respondents saw the Program as a promise of permission -- "permission," as one parent observed, "to help students learn rather than try to fit them into the curriculum on the basis of their age." (87) Such optimism was certainly not restricted to parents. One teacher saw the Program as a tool to "rejuvenate our roles." (68) However, some classroom teachers tempered their idealism with a cautious dose of pragmatism. "I don't think there are benefits for teachers," responded one, "but more work." (46) "I see [no benefits]," stated another. "I would find its implementation an impossible extra burden -- quite bluntly, I would quit teaching. And I love my job." (25)

In the sample, a few respondents expressed serious concern about or disagreement with the Program. Although some endeavoured to describe their reservations carefully, others expressed the dearth of benefits for teachers in the Program with cursory answers such as "none," "confusing," or "more work."

In the more explanatory expressions of concern, teachers worried about their ability to endure the requirements of their new role. This is the paradox cited in a number of the responses. In shifting the onus of education from the teacher to the student, some believe the teacher is relinquishing responsibility only to acquire more burdens.

Still, most of the responses pointed out benefits for teachers. All acknowledged that change would occur. Many cited "collaboration" with colleagues as a new reality. Others applied to teachers the new title of "facilitator." (817) Indeed, if *The Intermediate Program* offers a challenge to teachers, the majority of the respondents have chosen to accept it with enthusiasm.

BENEFITS FOR PARENTS

Many of the responses on how parents will benefit from *The Intermediate Program* concern evaluation and reporting. Since many of the respondents are teachers, this emphasis on the pros and cons of assessment suggests two things: firstly, that many teachers consider the report card the primary medium of communication between the school and parents, and, secondly that they are cognizant of how assessment and reporting will change under the new Program.

As far as the benefits of the new reporting is concerned, responses are mixed. One respondent stated that parents will be presented with "a better understanding of their child's true abilities and progress..." (1734) Another commented that parents will "have far less responsibility in educating their children... If the report 'sugar coats' the child's achievement, they will no longer understand [how] they should help their child." (1537)

Still other respondents pointed out that the success or failure of reporting hinges on the conscientiousness of the reporter, i.e., the classroom teacher. When reporting is thorough, respondents believe parents will be better informed: "They will have a better understanding of the process of their child's education," stated one teacher, "based primarily on positive reporting." (70)

Some parents are concerned about their ability to keep track of their child's progress. One parent stated that the Program is "only creating a big worry that individuals [i.e., students] might drown or be left behind with the excuse that this is his or her own rate of proceeding." (134) In this

regard, the emphasis on "what children can do" is not welcomed by all. Said one teacher: "Parents will not know how to help their children at home or where to encourage their children to improve if they do not understand what their child cannot do." (1172)

Generally, most of the respondents recognized that the Program will inspire or compel parents to become more "involved" in their children's education. Some of those surveyed specified that parental involvement would increase. Although most responses seemed to view enhanced parental participation as a positive thing, some respondents suggested that it may be a detriment to the education of their children. "Parents could be more involved," observed one group of teachers. "[But] do they want this? How educated are they? ... Are they able to have intelligent input?" (153)

Although a popular theme, not all comments on benefits for parents were limited to reporting and involvement. Many respondents stated that the Program will greatly serve parents by making their children "happier." And one respondent pointed out that increased child "self-esteem" as a result of the Program would strengthen "family ties" at home. (112)

BENEFITS FOR THE PUBLIC

Views on the effect of *The Intermediate Program* on the public good fell into two categories -- respondents were either interested in the type of citizens the Program will create for the future or the amount of tax debt it will create for the present.

A significant portion of the cursory responses echoed the key words found in much of the *Year 2000* literature. The Program will create "problem-solvers," "critical thinkers", and "thinking citizens." It promotes "lifelong learning skills" (221), fosters "social responsibility" (224), and so on.

However, some responses explored the idea that the greatest challenge of the future will be "change." The Program must, wrote one superintendent, "better prepare students for a changing world." (96) In fact, many respondents speculated that the Program would make students better able to adapt to change.

The Program will prepare students for a future rife with upheaval, respondents said, by promoting problem-solving (70) and by fostering in them an international perspective. One teacher observed: "The school system should be able to produce more flexible, self-directed, creative, and contributing citizens that are more adaptable to change... The system should be able to promote a [broader] global view for children." Concerning the necessity to teach children to exist within a multi-racial and multi-cultural society, the same respondent later wrote: "Potential exists for students to be more tolerant and understanding of differences." (144)

This is not to say that all respondents believed that the Program will create better citizens. "Productivity in the market-place will fall," wrote one teacher. "Students who know nothing of competition will be misfits." "Isn't school an academic centre?" asked the same teacher. "Why is there such enormous focus on environment awareness, author's expectations, self-motivation, etc.?" (140)

Respondents critical of the Program also voiced concern about costs. Many expressed doubt that sufficient public funds exist. "[It will] break the taxpayer financially," wrote one respondent. (198) "Is the public willing to pay more taxes to buy these [programs] for schools?" asked another. (569)

However, there were those respondents who balanced the costs of the Program with its perceived benefits. "Expensive," noted one educator at a First Nations school, "but it is worth it."

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE TEACHER'S ROLE

Most of the responses suggested that a fundamental change in role will result. Echoing *Year 2000* terminology, many of the respondents described the teacher's new function as that of a "facilitator."

Other key words describing the teacher's changing responsibilities which appeared again and again included "sharing," "collaboration," and "cooperation" -- suggesting that the respondents perceived that the new Program requires a team approach to education.

Of all the participants surveyed, the group which expressed the most concern about their new role in the Program was teachers. Although many welcomed the new mandate for collaboration, just as many seemed to worry about "time" -- time to launch the Program; time to learn the Program; and time needed to maintain the Program. Observed one respondent: "More time will be needed for implementation." (1700) "When do I do all this?" wrote another. "My weekends?

No thanks." (1169) One respondent speculated that time is a concern which will gradually diminish: "[The Program] initially would be more work," wrote this respondent, "but then [the time demands] would decrease." (1733)

Another teaching concern revolved around retraining and in-services. Respondents stated repeatedly that teachers will need to be carefully instructed on how to launch and maintain the Program. "I will need significant in-servicing," wrote one educator, "[and] strategies for dealing with sensitive issues which will arise out of satisfying the goals [of the Program]." (1510)

The Program may alter the role of the librarian. Wrote one librarian: "I will have greater opportunities to work with teachers in planning units together and I will have greater opportunities to work with small groups and individual students." (1325)

Participants in education other than teachers expressed less concern about the Program's direct impact on their lives (although it should be noted that many parents left this question on the survey blank, perhaps believing that it applied only to educators). Those parents who did respond seemed overwhelmed. "It's exciting to be involved in the early stages," wrote one, "although at times I feel lost by [it] all... Hopefully, things will become clearer as I learn more." (1184) Other parents, who recognize that their stake in the school system will be raised, ask only that their participation be valued by educators. One parent suggested that "more respect [will be] given to a child's first teacher, the parent." (1392)

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE ROLES OF OTHERS IN SCHOOLS AND DISTRICTS

On one point there seems to be no disagreement -- everyone's role in the school system will change as a result of the Program. As one respondent put it: "Librarians will become resource persons. Principals will become involved in planning. Districts will be forced to generate more money. [And] districts will have to educate the public regarding the new Program." (1144) No job description will remain unchanged.

As well, most respondents seem to agree that the initiative will make the school community of parents, resource people, administrators, district staff, and teachers far tighter. As one respondent commented: "[The Program] will require much teamwork." (657)

The initiative will require increased reliance on "resource centres" (1739) and, respondents suggested, an increased reliance on each other. Teachers will need, wrote one respondent, more support from colleagues and the administration than ever before. (1750)

Indeed, one respondent stated that under the new Program the administration will no longer simply act as management. "Management [will] become educational leaders rather than administrators," the respondent wrote. (1682) Observed another: "Administrators will need to become leaders and helpers in the process of restructuring schools." (1635) And still another respondent stated that "administrators [will] need to be less judgmental. If I take [a] risk, will the administrator support me?" (1720) In fact, one person suggested that trustees and board office staff "spend more time in classrooms." (1141)

Many respondents mentioned the initiative's impact on the role of parents. One respondent advocated a type of re-education: "Parents will need to be educated to our way of thinking." (1720) But parents will have to do more than comply. One respondent wrote that parents will need to play an active role in ensuring that schools receive sufficient resources to sustain the Program. "Parents and [the] board," stated the respondent, "will have to be advocates of [the] increased needs of students and teachers to implement this Program." (1166)

Not only will existing jobs change. Some respondents believe that the Program will make new roles necessary. "An 'educational leader' needs to be available... to coordinate and facilitate the Program," wrote one respondent. "This educational leader is not necessarily the principal, and needs time that is clear of administrative duties." (1686)

In addition, some respondents expressed strong concerns that the Ministry has considered changes in every aspect of the school system except funding -- the issue they consider central to the initiative's success.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE STRUCTURE AND ORGANIZATION OF SCHOOLS

Although this question related to the school, many teachers' responses dealt with the structure and organization of the classroom.

As far as changes to the social infrastructure are concerned, respondents seemed to focus on one word. Reported one respondent: "The one word that comes to mind is flexibility. We as educators are being asked to examine what we do in the classroom, and move to a more

learner-oriented classroom environment." (48) Indeed, respondents pointed out that this flexibility needs to apply to the timetable as well as to classroom organization.

Some observed that structure must change in a major and fundamental way. "The implications for structure and organization are mind-boggling," wrote members of a school mathematics department. "Should schools consider an open-area integrated-academic-studies approach with teachers acting as facilitators, record-keepers, organizers, dropping the role of instructors/specialists altogether? Should para-professionals be trained to supervise science laboratory experiments in an open format allowing for continuous progress?" (1561)

Some would agree that a change in structure will affect the dynamics of discipline in the classroom. However, it is interesting to note that those respondents who referred to discipline stressed the word "behaviour." Stated one respondent: "Teachers and students must have a clearly defined message of acceptable behaviour." (1733) Another noted: "[The Program] implies a slight change in tone within the school to accommodate students' patterns of movement in response to class activities. In general, a loosening of behavioural expectations with all that that implies." (1524)

Concerning the physical structure of the classroom, respondents expressed concern about "class size" (in terms of number of students) and space. Regarding the number of pupils per class, respondents did not suggest figures or sizes, except to say that teachers must be allowed to work with "smaller groups" and that traditional-sized classes are too large. "31 kids are too many," said one respondent. (1159) Another observed: "Teachers will no longer be able to handle 150-200 students" as part of a "rotating timetable." (1185)

In sum, respondents considered an appropriate physical environment vital to the realization of *The Intermediate Program*. Many suggested that changes in teaching practices have to be accompanied by changes to the school structure in order for the initiative to work. Said one respondent: "[The] structure and organization [within] the present [system] conflicts with the design of the new Program." (379) Some respondents feel that widespread remodelling has to take place.

IMPLICATIONS FOR CLASSROOM ORGANIZATIONS

The respondents to this query were mostly teachers. Many parents and school district personnel did not address this item. For teachers, class size is a contentious issue. Indeed, many respondents were so concerned about class size that they discussed the topic at length in the previous question concerning school structure. A good many responses called for both "a smaller number of students" and a "larger physical classroom." Interestingly, many of the respondents made lists including items that ranged from "shelving" and "tubs" (1655) to "computers" and "class libraries." (1544) In fact, computers were a popular request. Some respondents claimed that students need them, others that teachers need them to keep track of student progress. (1494) Many respondents mentioned the need for "technology" in the classroom. One seemed to feel that a good start would be to ensure that each room has "running water and electrical outlets." (1553) Another respondent went so far as to describe the perfect classroom, and the specifications sum up nicely the sentiments of others. "The ideal classroom," wrote this respondent, "would have 22-26 students, an adjoining conference room, three to six

computers, a video camera and monitor, tables and chairs and couches, and tonnes of books on many subjects." (471)

As far as direct implications are concerned, many responses again featured the term "flexible." Respondents noted that the new Program would require "flexible groupings" (1686) and "flexible scheduling." (1682) Others pointed out that such flexibility will make classrooms "noisier" (824) and will generate more "movement." (Many respondents simply wrote the word "fluidity" which may refer to this movement of students.)

Although many of the responses to this question were positive and pragmatic, one respondent predicted that chaos will result. "Absolute confusion," said this respondent about the classrooms of the future. "Thirty individual programs? Get real!" (561)

Ideas that Might Facilitate the Implementation of The Intermediate Program

Aspects of implementation emerged as a major concern throughout the responses. The many suggestions offered by respondents on how to best implement *The Intermediate Program* generally involved four major topics: time, training, money, and Ministry and district support. Most responses were variations on one or more of these topics. Of these four topics, "time" was the most often discussed. Teachers stated that they needed time to implement the Program; time to meet with Ministry representatives; and time to meet with colleagues from other districts. Many parents stated that they will need time to reflect on and adjust to the changes.

Closely connected to the issue of time was that of training. Many teachers identified the need for in-service for themselves and for others, including substitute teachers, paraprofessionals, school administrators, and parents. Parents are apprehensive about how this change will affect their children.

Funding was also a reoccurring topic in the survey. Some respondents simply jotted the word "money" under this question, and others phrases such as "more money for education." Such references are either requests for funding to launch the Program and purchase resources, or for teacher payment for attending in-services. Many wholeheartedly agreed with the intended changes, their major concern was how they will be financed. "I support this document in general in all areas. I wholeheartedly agree with the overall picture it paints, but please don't ask me to implement it without putting the in the time and money that are essential to make it work. Don't give me the dream and then blank it out by not giving me the resources to make this dream come true." (78)

To ensure that the Program is launched smoothly and effectively, respondents suggested that schools hire or assign educators who would devote themselves exclusively to the task of implementation. Respondents had various names for these people -- "qualified facilitators" (1682), "consultants" (1720), "coordinators" (1739), and, in the words of a concerned parent, "master teachers" (1585) but in each case the function of the person was the same -- to expedite the implementation of the Program in each school. Some respondents suggested that such "facilitators" sit on district and provincial boards in order to confer with the Ministry on the

status of implementation. Others suggested that experienced facilitators be sent to other schools and districts to share their knowledge of the Program.

Others want included in the document practical examples to illustrate "how the evaluation works." For example, they suggested that the document include commentaries to illustrate how questions can be used to collect information from children, and specimens of information-gathering formats with sample information filled in to provide models.

What Would Help You Implement The Intermediate Program?

The responses to this question echoed the sentiments expressed in reply to the previous one. Those surveyed repeated their concerns about time, money, training, and support. Frequently, they expressed this concern more passionately than above -- perhaps because this question on the survey asked for a personal interpretation.

Regarding the issue of time, one respondent's answer was: "Time! Time! Time!" (1538) Another specified with less emotion that teachers need this time for "collaborative planning, strategies, developing themes, and problem-solving." (1728) Many others doubted that the time line presented is realistic.

Requests for money were just as emphatic and numerous. One respondent asked for "flexible budgeting" [to update] "classroom resources." (1720) Perhaps cognizant that funding alone will not ensure quality, another respondent requested: "Dollars, and a faith in their value." (1720)

Training conducted on an "on-going" basis was also stressed, and respondents repeated the need for teachers to receive both training on the implementation of the Program and opportunities to meet with other intermediate educators. As far as the process of "educating the educators" is concerned, one respondent suggested that the Ministry conduct its teacher in-services as a teacher conducts a class: "Treat us like you treat kids." (1521) Some respondents again suggested having experts travel to different schools and districts giving workshops on the Program. (1739) Another proposed having entire teaching staffs travel to "model schools" to observe the Program in action. (1720)

As well, some respondents expressed a need for "moral support from... peers and administrators." (1738) Public support of the Program is an important issue for several respondents. One person surveyed wanted more media coverage, asking for "TV commercials, newspaper headlines and columns dealing with the proposed changes to the system...." (1736) Another responded suggested "ad and information campaigns" and added: "education of [the] public is very important." (1737)

Some respondents stated that the need for communication was not restricted to the public. One argued that *The Intermediate Program* document was vaguely written, and if improved could expedite implementation. "I realize that this is a response draft," wrote this respondent, "but a clear direction with clearly defined language would provide a springboard from which

implementation could be effected. My hopes are that by the time the final draft takes form, clearer thinking will be infused." (1142)

In summary, responses regarding the implementation of *The Intermediate Program* reveal that there is enthusiasm among respondents about the Program's aspirations. But the responses also reveal that the enthusiasm is tempered by apprehension about trying to put the Program in place. Part of this apprehension can be attributed to the reluctance anyone might feel when confronted with change, especially large-scale change, and some can be attributed to the sentiments of those respondents who are clearly opposed to the Program.

But, mainly the respondents are calling for training, support, and guidance to help them breathe life into the initiative. They also want assurances that the Ministry is willing and able to provide adequate financial resources to both launch the Program and sustain it. However, the respondents do not see their relationship with the Ministry as strictly financial. Many are looking to the Ministry for guidance and leadership in the process of implementation. Some simply request moral support in the face of all this change. And in addition to support, many respondents are asking for time, time to learn the Program, and time to implement it.

That many respondents are excited by the Program's principles is revealed by the way they replied to the first part of the Implementation section, concerning benefits. When listing the Program's benefits to students and teachers, many respondents used the language of *The Intermediate Program* document and other *Year 2000* literature. Respondents wrote of "ownership of education," "a learner-focused curriculum," "the building of self-esteem," etc. These echoes from the pages of the document suggest that many people are in tune with the ideas and concepts behind the words.

Many parents are enthusiastic about becoming more involved with their child's education. Some respondents feel that the public would benefit from the implementation of this Program, in that the problem-solvers, critical thinkers, and life-long learners it would produce would be assets to society.

Future Curriculum Guides

In response to the question "What format would be most helpful to you in future curriculum guides?" the suggestions repeated again and again were practicality and simplicity. The respondents want practical, brief, easy-to-follow curriculum guides. As far as language is concerned, many emphasized the need for brevity and economy of writing. Some suggested listing information in point form.

Regarding content, the respondents want less discussion of philosophy and more practical tips on integration, teaching strategies, and evaluation procedures. They made these suggestions:

- Provide a different curriculum guide for each strand. Organize the guides by subject area, and include in each area all pertinent lists of descriptors, goals, and evaluation procedures.
- Include checklists of skills and activities.
- Include concrete models and practical examples of activities for the classroom. Give us sample units: suggest how we can best implement and integrate the Program's ideas and themes. "Provide materials we can use and adapt."
- Consider offering a separate guide on integration.
- Write each guide as an easy-to-follow framework for instruction.
- Give us less philosophy, and emphasize practical examples.
- Suggest a sequence or structure to the themes and concepts to be covered, so that activities are not repeated year after year.
- Provide more examples of innovative methods of evaluation and assessment. (i.e., the use of video- and audio-tapes, etc.)
- Provide blackline masters (i.e., specific forms) which we can copy and use for assessment and evaluation. Give us specific examples of how to perform anecdotal reporting.
- Offer computer software in association with the guide. Software designed for recording student evaluation would be an asset.
- Provide a comprehensive list of sources -- "What is available and where can it be accessed?" An annotated bibliography would be helpful.
- Provide a cross-reference for ideas and activities between strands and subjects.
- Ensure that the resource section is comprehensive -- include examples of typical lesson plans, activity lists, and suggested materials. Provide us with some "recipes" for instruction.
- Ensure that all objectives, goals, and learning descriptors are succinctly stated.
- Three-hole punch the material to fit a binder.

In response to the question "Do you have any suggestions or advice for the writers of future curriculum guides?" many responses were similar to the suggestions listed above. Again, the chief concern seemed to be clarity and succinctness of expression. They suggested:

- Condense the text.
- Simplify the language so the material is easy to understand.
- Use less Ministry jargon.
- Present material in point form.
- Issue draft guides and make them available to teachers so that feedback and criticisms can be given.

Perhaps reflecting the apprehension that many feel about the Program, the suggestions on the format and writing of future curriculum guides reveal the respondents' need for practical and clear guidance. They want brief, easy-to-understand, jargon-free guides that list concrete ideas on integration, teaching strategies, evaluation procedures, and the use of materials. They want the guides to be organized by strand, with each strand section containing lists of descriptors and goals. And they want master copies of activity checklists and assessment forms included in the resource section, with examples of how to complete forms such as the anecdotal report card.

Interpretation of the Field Response

Interpretation of the Field Response

This section of the report appraises information described in the previous sections and focuses on the general field response to *The Intermediate Program*, discusses major themes that emerged, and considers the implications of the field response.

What Was the General Response?

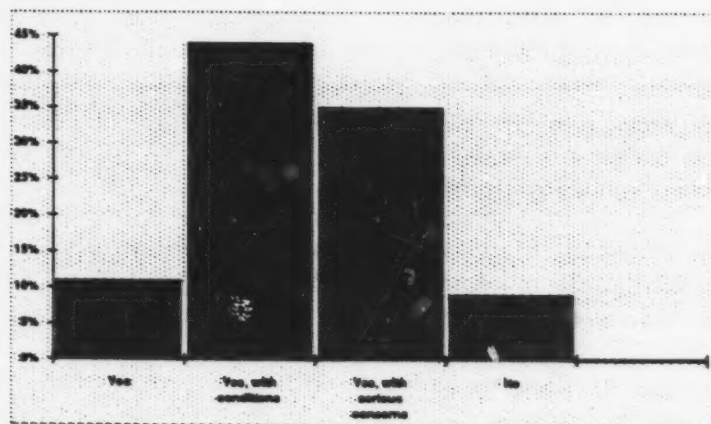
When people said what they liked about the Program, they emphasized that it focuses on the learner, it values all children, it respects cultures, it empowers students and teachers, it is flexible and relevant, it supports life-long learning, and it applies current research on learning.

The Committee reported that although most respondents are in favour of the Program's intentions, many qualified their approval with reservations and concerns. To present a picture of the general response to the initiative, this part of the document defines, classifies, and analyses the various opinions of the 350 respondents who made up the sample survey.

Generally, opinion about the Program fell into four categories:

1. Yes, I am in favour of the Program.
2. Yes, I am in favour, but with conditions.
3. Yes, I am in favour, but I have serious concerns.
4. No, I am not in favour of the Program.

Categories of Responses to *The Intermediate Program* N=350



The following is an analysis of the responses within each category.

1. Yes, I am in favour of the Program.

Respondents in this group unequivocally supported the ideas presented in the document. A few professed to already be teaching aspects of the proposed Program. Many held the view that, although the Program will take effort, the benefits for students or themselves make it worthwhile. They seemed happy with the Program as it is presented in the draft document, and they communicated strong support for its philosophy and goals. These respondents expressed few problems in interpreting the document. If they were negative at all, it was about the language of the document. Many in this category mentioned that time for in-service and preparation were necessary, but stated few other problems with implementation of the Program. Others confessed they have no idea how the Program will be implemented: they simply trust that it will happen.

2. Yes, I am in favour, but with conditions.

This category represents the majority of respondents. They support the directions proposed and hope that the Program will be implemented, but they believe that certain conditions have to be met before the Program can be put into practice. Essentially, these conditions do not affect the integrity of the Program. In no instance did these respondents call for a philosophical "about-face" or a major policy change. In most instances they simply stated that schools and teachers will have to be given certain tools in order to implement the Program. Primarily, the tools or conditions mentioned are time, money, resources, Ministry support, retraining, smaller class sizes, a more explicit implementation guide, and Assessment and Evaluation materials. Virtually every respondent in this category mentioned the need for either more time or more money to implement the Program. (A majority of the respondents asked for both.)

When raising the issue of time, most respondents in this category stated that they believe a longer transition period is necessary to put the Program into effect. Others argued that class room teachers will need extra time from their teaching schedule to

I whole-heartedly agree with philosophy and goals and find the Year 2000 curriculum an exciting challenge (1728)

My first impression is that I must closely examine my role as a teacher... The changes to my Program can happen, but may do so over time. I must be willing to risk and do things differently but always maintain a good knowledge base. Other teachers have much to offer and sharing of knowledge is crucial. (48)

The goals reflect a broader view of the learner and the needs [which must] be addressed by the teacher. (309)

I just hope we can implement it. (418)

This will require a significant change in our practice. We're prepared to be open, honest, flexible in a sincere effort to do our best to support the new Intermediate Program. It is a very significant change. (133)

The core ideas are good, but teachers will definitely need smaller class sizes in order to implement this student-focused Program. (288)

The Program does not address needs of teachers: time for in-service and professional development. Rather, we have less time than we ever had. (1065)

Money, time, resources, professional development. The staff needs to develop programs to help educate parents. (727)

A cautious approach is necessary. (427)

attend to assessment and evaluation duties. In many instances, time is closely associated with the condition of class size. Respondents who addressed this topic contend that the number of students per classroom will have to decrease in order for teachers to give the appropriate amount of attention to each student as described in *The Intermediate Program*.

Although they support the principles of *The Intermediate Program*, these respondents have concerns about the consistent interpretation of the document, and about their and others' ability to learn and adjust. Some respondents in this category want more specific information about the Program's implementation so they can get on with the task.

3. *Yes, I am in favour, but I have serious concerns.* The respondents within this category express approval for the general directions stated in *The Intermediate Program*, but are either overwhelmed by the proposal or are seriously concerned about one or more aspects of the Program's policy. They have reservations about the likelihood of its successful implementation.

In some cases, this group shared marked similarities with Category 2 respondents except for one important point: Category 2 respondents stated that the Program could be implemented under certain specified conditions; many Category 3 respondents argued that the absence of certain conditions (funding, for example) would make successful implementation impossible. Generally, the tone of responses in this category is more grave than that of the previous two groups.

These respondents frequently qualified their position by identifying external forces that prevent them from being able to change. Some were inclined to be cynical. Others agreed with some positions, disagreed with others, and were adamantly opposed to certain features of the proposed Program.

We find the philosophy and goals complete and appropriate to the projected needs of students who will complete their formal schooling in the Year 2000 and beyond. Changes may need to be made as we work through implementation. (351)

Teachers will not be able to keep up to demands of individual learning with present time constraints, class size, ... teacher-bashing by government. (468)

We all love it but [it has a] strong aura of fantasy. (103)

Learner focus should include the teacher as a "learner" in the development of expertise. I don't feel the importance of growth through change is being adequately addressed. (1140)

We believe that the goals are overwhelming and do not truly reflect reality. (567)

Unrealistic, we cannot be expected to report on every student--or goal. (1290)

Yes, [the Program] is learner-focused, but where does learner accountability come into the picture? (437)

Some "watering down" of current [Program] content will occur academically. This may hinder the brighter students but I expect they will excel in spite of the Program. (453)

Respondents in a sub-group within this category (about 17%) admit to being in general agreement with the goals of the Program, but cite one or more significant philosophical differences or concerns. In some cases, respondents confessed concerns about concepts such as Continuous Progress or about the extent of the learner focus. In other cases, they expressed reservations about the effect the Program may have on some types of students. Some argued that the Program has the potential to affect all students adversely, despite the good intentions of its goals.

4. No, I am not in favour of the Program.

This population resists implementation of the Program for several reasons: its members are happy with the present system; they feel that change is being forced on them arbitrarily; or they are simply opposed to the Program. Of those opposed, many stated simply that they favour the education system as it now stands. Their argument seems to be: If the system isn't broken, don't fix it. Others conceded that the present system needs improvement, but believe that the proposed Program is not the answer. Indeed, some stated that the Program is based on a flawed premise.

Some respondents reported that no positive benefits can possibly arise from the Program. Others admitted that good might possibly come about, but would be overshadowed by the Program's ill effects. Some comments in this category were terse, suggesting that the respondents did not consider the Program worthy of criticism.

Some of those opposed believe that, among the goals of the learner-focused Program, the goal of Intellectual Development is not emphasized nearly enough. Indeed, some argued that it will be neglected, at great cost to the integrity of the school system. Other respondents argued that the Program is attempting to usurp the responsibilities of parents. Some of these criticisms were polite, while others were patently hostile. The basis for most of them appears to be a satisfaction with the present system.

Does [the Program] really meet their needs? ... it shelters them from such negative concepts as rigid time lines, clear minimum standards, experience with failure... things they must know how to deal with when they enter the real world of work. (299)

In an attempt to revise an existing educational system, which certainly had its faults, the "baby has been thrown out with the bath water." Herein lies the key problem. Rather than building on a system which functioned quite well, there has been a completely radical change. It lacks in research, in piloting-practice and has been clearly imposed on people. That method of doing things is unacceptable and implies that all previous systems and methods were lacking. It will be an interesting thing to see the end-product of this philosophy. (140)

I like the present system. (1451)

The assumption that teenagers know what's best for themselves is patently false... Have you people ever met any teenagers?? (1438)

Are we setting the stage for inferior low-quality education--mediocrity without standards? I believe we may be. (1538)

This document seems to assume that all children are little robots moving along an assembly line. What about the influence of the 5 years at home before the child reaches school? Kids don't show up on the first day of P1 like little sponges in search of the ideal society. (821)

In conclusion, the majority of the field supports the intentions of the Intermediate Program. However, it is clear that successful implementation of the Program will depend on careful consideration of the concerns and conditions raised by the respondents.

What Major Themes Emerged?

In the Introduction to the Program document, its authors state: "This publication is about change. The nature, scope, and rationale for this change will become clearer as you read on."

The Intermediate Program Field Response Committee noted that, indeed, many respondents did reflect on the phenomenon of *change*. Apparent in the responses, is that consideration of the "nature and scope" of the change delighted many; but, for some, it has created stress because, to them, the implementation operations in the document seem mostly unspecified and the Program's outcomes are uncertain. The "scope" of the change overwhelmed some respondents. They linked requests for *support* and encouragement to their ability or willingness to make the necessary changes. The clarity of the "rationale" for change was questioned by some, and gave rise to comments about the need for revisions to the document and the need to improve communications among shareholders in order for the changes to be understood. To many, *communication* is basic to the acceptance of *The Year 2000* initiatives. The following discusses change, support, and communication as major themes and suggests that the field's discussions on the draft document have done much to raise the educational consciousness of a large number of British Columbians.

A review of respondents' comments on change reveals that the changes implicit in *The Intermediate Program* were welcomed and considered long overdue by many; they expressed their commitment to the changes and pointed out that the position statements have integrity, which should be maintained. They admit that more clarity is required, but accept the challenge because of the benefits they see for their students and themselves. At the other end of the spectrum, some respondents do not see the need for change; they find the changes described in the document discomforting.

In dealing with change, some suggest the need to include a system for minimizing stress and in which there are opportunities to take risks without the fear of external criticism. To others, change is inevitable; they accept and value it, but acknowledge that adjustment is difficult. They accept that changes in education are part of a larger world change; nevertheless, they find that ideas and technology change so fast that it's hard to keep up to date.

We need a chance to change, develop new strategies and rejuvenate our roles... In the face of dramatic change teachers will be likely to re-assess the strengths and weaknesses of their current practices (104)

Will require a significant change in our practice. We're prepared to be open, honest, flexible in a sincere effort to do our best to support the new Intermediate Program. It is a very significant change. (133)

We find the philosophy and goals complete and appropriate to the projected needs of students who will complete their formal schooling in the Year 2000. (351)

We are being forced to look at the whole child, which is good. It does put stress on the teacher to change therefore we need in-serviceing, coaching, opportunity to observe, practice, evaluate and plan. (15)

Change generates stress. This is not accounted for in the present implementation plans (96)

Others question -- "Why do we have to change the whole structure to do this?" (24) For them, the proposed changes are frustrating, stressful, unmanageable, unnecessary, overwhelming, even impossible to put into effect.

Observers of the paradigm shift implicit in the Intermediate document made comments about the difference between changing the system and implementing an innovation within an existing structure: "It seems to us that simply tinkering with the present system will not meet the needs of the directions set by *The Year 2000*." (1495) In this regard, many respondents identified more than one isolated aspect of the change, but few respondents noted that the parts are indeed interrelated and thus a change in one part influences another. There is no clear evidence that many respondents understand that a change of this magnitude requires that all of those involved examine the interrelated parts of the system simultaneously. Numerous respondents focused on one part of the change as if that part were the whole.

Some respondents implied that the changes would be better understood and more acceptable if statements made in the document were explicitly supported by research and practice and took into consideration the perspectives of shareholders. Others stated that they appreciated the fact that the Program addressed current research on learning.

Several responses indicated that some respondents are having difficulty breaking out of the mode of subject-oriented and teacher-directed education. In some instances, people expressed willingness to change but find it difficult to capture the "vision." Other responses imply that some people will continue to anchor themselves in the practices with which they are comfortable, while others state that the problem is with the students, who may not be able to change. Some respondents stated that aspects of the Program are unacceptable and are contrary to their beliefs.

In an attempt to revise an existing educational system, which certainly had its faults, the "baby has been thrown out with the bath water." Herein lies the key problem. Rather than building on a system which functioned quite well, there has been a completely radical change. (140)

The document is in response to a changing society. But it is important to recognize that past teaching practices have met the demands and expectations of that time. We have forged our current practice from experience and reflections of what is best for kids, and our view toward the future of education needs to be anchored in the exceptionally fine teaching that has already occurred. (42)

We have 10 years to implement the Intermediate Program. Let's take our time and do a good job. There are too many teachers in all curriculum areas who are not philosophically aligned. This is extremely important. The process is crucial. (161)

How to be successful at planning and evaluating a program on an individual basis is such a major change that we will need very much help and encouragement to meet this challenge successfully. The time and effort required is daunting. (15)

The implications are that a real change of approach and focus will be necessary. To accomplish this we believe a lot of in-service will be necessary and time to plan will be required. We believe pilot projects should be developed, evaluated and then shared prior to full implementation. (353)

Active Learner philosophy good but what will it look like in our classrooms? What is the vision? Goals cannot be viewed in isolation, they must be integrated. We need to clarify and refine descriptors. Standards are needed so we as teachers know what they mean. (357)

Too much change. Unless we get together on what is taught, at what level, there is going to be a sequencing problem. (175)

The seemingly optimistic view of the learner reflects a belief in the ultimate goodness of the learner -- a belief we cannot accept... we also believe that students are not naturally inclined to do the right thing or make the right choices. (1495)

Several respondents observed that the changes proposed in the Program will require resources above and beyond those required to maintain the existing programs. They point out that, in their view, time frames and resource allocations must be determined before the implementation of the Program can be expected to succeed. Some respondents summarized this view by listing a set of demands. Others suggest it is in the creative use of available resources that some solutions can be found.

Some groups presented single-issue papers to address concerns about how the changes might affect their subject area or their function within the school system. Each group identified a need to preserve its role and, if possible, get more time for its subject area. Some appear to need assurance that the proposed changes will not erode their power or territory.

The responses cited in this section are taken mostly from those that used the word "change" and as such may not be representative of the responses as a whole. However, those responses which include "change" are frequently negative, and contain an emotional element often revealed by the language chosen and the juxtaposition of ideas. They suggest feelings of discomfort, and in many cases some fear. Uncertainty is expressed in terms of concrete problems -- problems of time, stress, funding, professional development, and class size. On the other hand, those who look forward to the change identify similar concerns, but, at the same time, see benefits for students and themselves. As one respondent advised: "Change requires both risk and effort, and is motivated only by a belief that it is worthwhile and possible." (1917)

Linked closely to the issue of change were numerous concerns about support in implementing the Program. The Intermediate Program Field Response Committee noted that many respondents linked to all aspects of the Program concerns about time, class size, funding, and facilities. Looking at the frequency of each concern within the sample of 350, the findings were that 94% of the respondents expressed a concern about time, 76% raised the issue of class size, 73% commented on a need for funding, and 26% identified a need for improved facilities. The Committee noted that these concerns identified in the sample seemed consistent with those expressed in the other submissions. Other concerns expressed included: problems with the anticipated workload, the need for in-service, and the request for recognition.

The issue of time was linked to many concerns. Some commented that time was needed to adjust to the changes. Others said that time was needed for in-service, for collaboration, for assessment and reporting preparation, and for planning integrated themes. Still others made reference to the time line for implementation, suggesting that it should be extended.

It will be up to the Ministry and local boards to creatively develop ways to release teachers rather than forcing staff to double-up classrooms and compromise quality of instruction in order to give the necessary release time to plan and implement. Considerable cooperative planning from the district level on down will be essential. (144)

Definitely will need extra classrooms, more staffing, more resources. Teachers will need extra time and help for planning individual programs, to help "assistants" with their helping roles. Cost: extra resources, more money, more classrooms and facilities, teacher aides, more equipment, more teachers, more teacher prep time. The cost will be considerable if this program is to run as it is presently outlined. (153)

Walls are still fixed. Specialists still exist. Class periods are still finite. Facilities need scheduling. Timetables must still be set. There are many rigid elements (in the system), most of which are real and unchangeable. (1)

Knowing more about where pupils are and what they need as they enter your class. How do we better meet those individual needs? What in essence changes so that we can do that? (178)

Many respondents expressed the need for support in their quest for smaller classes. Upper intermediate teachers commented on the number of students they are in contact with each week, saying that they have 165 to 180 different students to plan for and to report on.

Concerns about the need for financial support to implement the proposed changes echoed through many of the returns. According to the respondents, they need financial support to purchase learning resources; for time to prepare for implementation of the Program, and for release time to enable classroom visitations. As well, they want funding to provide the necessary in-service for teachers. Many teachers expressed their approval of the proposal, but stated clearly that their major concern was the financial support to ensure that students had the necessary resources. Library resources, thematic resource units, manipulative materials, computers, software, and audio-visual materials are, in the opinion of many respondents, the kinds of support needed to implement the new Program.

Several respondents raised the issue of the storage space required to keep the collections of student work suggested in the draft document. Others noted the need to review the physical attributes of existing classrooms in light of the Program. These respondents anticipate that proposed changes in instructional practice will require rooms that are larger than those currently available. Many specialists such as music and drama teachers noted the need to update their facilities.

A further aspect of support identified by many respondents was the need for in-service training. While this was a popular concern, most respondents did not elaborate or give examples. Exceptions were those who identified the need for in-service in evaluation and assessment. Some respondents expressed scepticism about the ability of universities to prepare teachers to deal with the new curriculum, particularly in the areas of evaluation and assessment.

Many respondents held the view that the Program should be more supportive of the efforts teachers are currently making. In some ways, the comments appear to be a plea for recognition of teachers' skills and talents. For example; some expressed concerns that the document does not recognize or accept differences among teachers and their teaching styles. "The document doesn't pay enough attention to recognizing positive current practices that many teachers are already doing"; (873) others say that the document does recognize this but does not go far enough: "The document legitimizes and recognizes what many teachers in this district are already doing, but doesn't go far enough in recognizing positive current practice." (305) Some believe that recognition of teachers' efforts would go a long way in keeping teacher morale up during the change.

Most pleas for support go beyond the content of the Intermediate Program document. Support for teachers is requested from the school districts, school administrators, parents, and the Ministry.

A persistent theme through the responses was the need to continue to improve communication and create more positive liaisons among teachers, administrators, parents, and the Ministry. Many respondents acknowledged that the processes currently being encouraged by the Ministry are helpful and they urge that these continue. Linked to some comments was the notion that

communication could be improved by more clearly defining the responsibility of parents, teachers, the Ministry, the school board, and the administration. Some suggest that by improving the clarity of this aspect of the document, the communication of its ideas would be enhanced.

Many respondents said that the response draft did not communicate its ideas clearly enough for them to "capture the vision." Many expressed a wish for more concrete examples in the document. The most frequent request was for samples or models to illustrate the planning a teacher must do to implement the Program; e.g.: day plans (typical day), year plans, and sample themes to illustrate integration.

Many felt that the referencing in the document needs to be made clearer to support the statements made; they requested that positions on, for example, integration, be supported by research evidence.

There was a call for the Program Team to address clarity in the revision of the document by using less "jargon" and providing definitions for terms such as "learner-focused," "integration," "continuous learning," "continuous progress," "learning descriptors," "goals," "attributes," "transitions" (i.e., entry and exit of all programs).

Some suggested that features be added to the revised document such as a glossary, index, and citations for research documentation. Most people's requests were for physical items to help them use the guide effectively: more tabs to help locate sections, more detailed table of contents and index, more consistency in the format of pages, and point-form summaries.

The need for better communication to inform parents and the community about the proposed changes was raised explicitly in many returns, and implied in others. Respondents point out the need to greatly increase public awareness and suggest that parents, community, and industry be educated to work as partners, as all have a stake in the Program. They suggest that parent education regarding student responsibility and for positive involvement in their child's education is needed. Others suggested the importance of creating liaisons with community-based resources and the need to have more media coverage of educational events.

In the view of the Committee, the themes described here capture the most persistent concerns expressed by respondents. How these issues are managed will have a major impact on the shape the Program eventually takes.

Managing the changes requires an appreciation of the larger context within which they fit. Educational change happens in a web of political, social, and economic events. Since the original Year 2000 proposals came out in 1989, the context has changed. Many major events, such as the recession, Canadian political instability, and the Gulf war cannot help but influence people's views and create stress and anxiety.

Amid this general anxiety are the education changes suggested in *The Intermediate Program*. The changes become the more stressful for some because, to them, the implementation

operations in the document are mostly unspecified and the Program's outcomes are uncertain. Concern over the lack of certainty is evident in all of the issues discussed above.

However, the same context that gives rise to anxiety and hesitation also gives rise to the need for change. It was, after all, the changing economic and social realities in B.C. that led to the Sullivan Royal Commission and subsequent proposals for a more responsive education system. The action of these forces -- the tug of resistance to change and the pull towards change -- results in tensions between the new and the old which can be beneficial or destructive, depending on the degree of disequilibrium they produce in the system.

Restoring the balance requires some "give" on both sides. For those most enthusiastic about the Program, this means improving the clarity of their vision both in terms of how it will work and what its outcomes will be. For those most resistant to the changes, it means accepting that in today's world change is necessary, and when well-designed can serve to reduce the pressures that surround us.

As a final point, the Committee concluded that the very process of mass dialogue, discussion, and reflection about *The Intermediate Program*, considering the size and content of the response, has raised educational consciousness to the point that no matter what the outcome, the system will never be the same because of all the fresh air and light that has been let in by the *Year 2000* initiatives.

What Are the Implications?

The Intermediate Program Field Response Committee supports the views of those who stated that the implications of the proposed changes are wide-sweeping, and that everyone involved must consider what the change implies for their roles and the roles of others. All shareholders might benefit from continued discussions with others and consider the response to *The Intermediate Program* as part of a process rather than an event.

Many respondents view the Ministry as the initiator of the change and the school districts as the leaders of the implementation who are responsible for providing clear direction. The roles, as defined by the respondents, are ones of leadership, the providers of both material and emotional support. Although, as some respondents testify, the Ministry and districts are performing these roles as well as possible given political pressures and the current economic situation, the perception of many in the field appears to be that those "on the front lines" have been sent into battle without the necessary equipment, supplies, and direction from their commanders.

The Ministry and districts might benefit from making public their support of the teachers for what they are currently doing; acknowledge that, given the limitations of the current system, they and their students have achieved much; and praise them for the efforts they are making to restructure a system that most agree needs to be changed, and that while they build the new system, the old will continue to fulfil its mission.

As well, all shareholders might let teachers know they are aware that the transition from the old system to the new is complex and will take time.

The Ministry and districts need to continue to expand their efforts to build support through involvement with other shareholders. The Intermediate Program Field Response Committee is aware of the extent of involvement by the field in this development, but some respondents' comments implied that the Program is being forced "from above," which indicates that they are either unaware or are ignoring the fact that the Intermediate Program is an outgrowth of extensive consultation beginning with the Sullivan Commission.

Implications for the Intermediate Program Team

Many respondents thanked the Team for generating a thought-provoking document that is student-centred and holistic in its vision. As well, some respondents expressed their appreciation to the Team for suggesting student involvement in the response.

Frequently, respondents linked the content, structure, and language of the document with contextual issues, such as funding and the provision of facilities, that are beyond the responsibility of the Team. The following focuses on the comments made about the document itself, its content and language.

There is considerable support for the general directions outlined in *The Intermediate Program*. There is a need, however, for refinement to bring clarity to aspects of the document that confused its readers. As well, there is a need to plan the structural features of the document carefully to ensure that its information is easily accessible. This implies the need for a highly skilled editorial and production staff to work with the Team through the revision.

In responding to the document, people had to look closely at their practice and in many cases consider views based on types of practice that differ greatly from their own. These people cannot help but feel threatened. Many specialists fear that their role may be altered or no longer needed, which threatens their livelihood or suggests the need for retraining. This implies the need for a careful and sensitive crafting of the document to give credit to what people are currently doing and to make clear the proposed shifts in roles and responsibilities.

When the positions expressed by various stakeholder groups are considered together, it becomes apparent that there may be some issues where compromise cannot be achieved. This implies the need for continued consultation with stakeholder groups and, where possible, opportunities for collaboration among those with diverse views. This may not change opinions, but it may increase tolerance for the views of others.

The sections on Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting confused and upset many respondents. This implies the need to give priority to this issue and communicate the decisions to the field as soon as possible.

The Intermediate Program document affronted some respondents' belief systems. These people are angry. Some may never change their views. Although their number is small, this implies the need to make the processes used by the Team and the Ministry evident in all documentation and presentations. In this way, the people who do not accept a holistic approach to education can at least appreciate that a consultative process has been used and its intentions are approved by the majority.

In summary, the Program's intentions are well received. Now is the time to address clarity and the issues raised about the Program's implementation. The recommendations which follow focus on clarity and implementation.

Recommendations
of the Intermediate Program Field Response Committee

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE INTERMEDIATE PROGRAM FIELD RESPONSE COMMITTEE

The introduction to *The Intermediate Program* stated: "Further development of the Intermediate Program is dependent upon the discussions and deliberations within your school and district communities." Thousands of people in British Columbia and beyond accepted this invitation to debate, reflect, and articulate their views on the vision presented in the document. The Intermediate Program Field Response Committee congratulates you, the Intermediate Program Team, for galvanizing extensive debate and discussion about the future of Intermediate education in the Province of British Columbia.

The Committee is aware that between the time the document was circulated and the receipt of this report, you have actively consulted others and have planned revisions to the document. No doubt many of the recommendations that follow have already been addressed. The Committee anticipates that these recommendations will confirm your thinking and offer fuel for further debate and reflection.

The Committee's mandate was to review the field responses, gather the range of views and perspectives of shareholders, and summarize and translate these findings into suggestions for the Team's deliberation and subsequent revision of *The Intermediate Program*. The Committee is aware that some of the recommendations that follow go beyond the scope of your responsibility. The Committee brings them to your attention in the hope that you will direct them to the appropriate agency. These are listed in a second set of recommendations beginning with number 2.1. In some instances, the recommendations are taken directly from responses in which one person succinctly presented the views of many others.

Recommendations to the Program Team

Many respondents praised the Intermediate Program Team for capturing a progressive and relevant learner-focused position in the document. In this spirit, many provided suggestions to make the document meet their needs more fully. These are noted throughout this report as they relate to the topic being discussed. Some respondents provided lengthy and substantial critiques with suggestions for your consideration. Such responses were too long and detailed to include within the report. Although the members of the Committee are aware that you are reviewing the returns, they suggest that you give the highlighted responses particular attention because of the unique perspectives or specific suggestions they contain.

As respondents point out, the draft document needs revision to more clearly communicate the positions and ideas it contains. The Committee agrees with the following advice and suggests its use as a guide to the writing, designing, and editing of the document: "What is simple, straightforward, and realistic will be used in practice. What is unwieldy, confusing, and overwhelming will be left on the shelf..." (269).

1.1 Recommendation: That concrete descriptions be given of key elements of the Program, e.g., Continuous Progress, Integration. In doing so, consider what the element is, what it is like, what it is not, and provide examples.

1.2 Recommendation: That the final document include features such as:

- a glossary to clarify the meaning of terms;
- cross-references to indicate where further discussion of concepts can be found;
- an index to facilitate the use of the document as a reference;
- excerpts from recent research to address how people learn and to legitimize the philosophy and direction of the *Year 2000* programs;
- (in a resource book or on computer software) scripts and newsletter information that teachers might use for communication with parents;
- structured overviews to introduce each section and point-form summaries at the end of each section;
- photographs to illustrate what the Program "looks like" in action; for example, photographs with captions to replace text in the case of ideas that are better understood visually;
- graphics to summarize and clarify ideas.

1.3 Recommendation: That the revised document be provided for review by shareholder groups prior to the development of the final document and the subsequent implementation of the Program.

1.4 Recommendation: That there be two documents -- a foundation document and a support/resource document.

1.5 Recommendation: That the issues and decisions related to Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting be reviewed and clarifications made, and that this information be communicated to the field as soon as possible.

1.6 Recommendation: That the Intermediate Program Team investigate the implications of having five goals as opposed to six, to make it congruent with the Primary and Graduation Programs. Whatever the decision, the rationale should be explained.

After considering the responses to *The Intermediate Program*, the Committee agrees with those respondents who pointed out that all parents, teachers, students, and communities should continue to have input into the Program as it is developed. The following recommendations support the view that effective communication is basic to gaining new understandings:

2.1 Recommendation: That the Ministry put into place a structure for the review of curriculum guides to ensure consistency of language use.

2.2 Recommendation: That an ongoing participatory review framework be designed to elicit feedback on developments as they occur.

2.3 Recommendation: That districts be provided with information and practical suggestions on how to approach change.

2.4 Recommendation: That the Ministry, school districts, and individual schools encourage meetings between shareholders to encourage attempts to find common ground in the event of disagreements on particular positions.

2.5 Recommendation: That media coverage be increased to improve general understanding of changes in the school system.

2.6 Recommendation: That the Ministry consider ways to continue and expand its support of direct field involvement.

2.7 Recommendation: That coordinated and adequately funded plans be made at the provincial, district, and school levels to encourage and support parental and community understanding of and involvement in the changes to the school program.

2.8 Recommendation: That where such changes have already occurred, the efforts of teachers, parents, and school committees be acknowledged.

2.9 Recommendation: That the issues of funding, time, and resources be addressed simultaneously in the document and by the Ministry to ensure that what is proposed in *The Intermediate Program* can be accomplished.

2.10 Recommendation: That the Ministry review the specifications for classrooms and specialty area rooms (e.g., the Arts areas) and ensure that adequate funding is provided for upgrading current facilities or for building new facilities as required in all parts of the province.

2.11 Recommendation: That pilot projects implementing components of *The Intermediate Program* continue to be funded and that reports regarding these projects be made available as resources for professional development.

2.12 Recommendation: That the Ministry make clear its intentions regarding the provision of professional development and the funding and time needed to support it.

2.13 Recommendation: That models of implementation be developed for use at the school and district levels.

2.14 Recommendation: That the philosophy and framework of *The Intermediate Program* be addressed in pre-service teacher education programs.

2.15 Recommendation: That the three Program Teams develop information to explain the transitions from program to program.